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TRAVELS

IN THE

TRANS-CAUCASIAN PROVINCES OF RUSSIA,

&c. &c.

Maynard W Currie

from his affe friend

R Gosling

In his leaving Eton Xmas 1845

TRAVELS

IN THE

TRANS-CAUCASIAN PROVINCES OF RUSSIA,

&c. &c.

MOUNT ARARAT.

TRAVELS

IN THE

TRANS-CAUCASIAN PROVINCES

OF

RUSSIA,

AND ALONG THE SOUTHERN SHORE OF THE

LAKES OF VAN AND URUMIAH,

IN THE

AUTUMN AND WINTER OF 1837.

BY CAPTAIN RICHARD WILBRAHAM,

SEVENTH ROYAL FUSILIERS,

LATELY EMPLOYED ON A PARTICULAR SERVICE IN PERSIA.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1839.

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PREFACE.

THE interest which many of my friends have expressed in the perusal of the Journals which form the contents of this volume has encouraged me to offer them to the public; although I feel that they are by no means what I could have wished them to be, or even what they would have been had I contemplated at the time the possibility of their appearing in print.

My Journal was, at first, kept for the amusement of my own family: latterly, travelling as I was without the society of any European, it became quite a companion to me; and, whether my carpets were spread in the dark and noisome stable of an Armenian hovel, or in the palace of a Turkish Pasha, I allowed no evening to pass without

recording more or less fully the impressions of the day. Many a page has been written amid hurry and confusion, or after a long and fatiguing march; but I have preferred giving unaltered the remarks which the moment suggested.

The rapidity with which the advance of winter obliged me to traverse the interesting country which borders upon Koordistan, unfortunately, prevented my adding to the very scanty information which we possess regarding the geography of that portion of Asia; but I venture to hope, that even the slight sketches contained in these pages may throw some additional light upon the more interesting subject of the social and moral condition of nations to which public attention has of late years been so eagerly directed.

Rode Hall, Cheshire,
April 6th, 1839.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Page

Rupture of the Negotiations between Persia and Herat—British Camp at Goolahek—Palace of the Nigaristan—Description of Tehran 1

CHAPTER II.

Persian Camp—Artillery—Regiments in Sanctuary—Audience of the Shah—Visit to the "Hajī" . . 13

CHAPTER III.

British Palace—Bazaars—Daroga, or Chief Magistrate—Palace of the Kasr-i-Kajar—Persian Villas . 23

CHAPTER IV.

Society in Persia—Literature—Persian Retainers—Freedom of the Women—Beauty of the Women—Persian Children—Etiquette—Public Character of the Persians—Revenue of the Country—Mode of Living—Smoking—Newspaper—Freedom of Speech . . 30

CHAPTER V.

Page

Departure of the Court and Camp — Commencement of Journey — Palace of Sulimaniah — Casveen—Population of Persia—Want of Water—Travelling by Night —Sultaniah—The "Grey Wind" 48

CHAPTER VI.

Persian Troops—Disorderly March—Unsoldierlike Appearance — Power of Endurance — Exactions of the Colonel—Punishments—Arrival at Tabreez . . 57

CHAPTER VII.

Ruined Mosque — Citadel—Tabreez — British Palace—Mines of Karadagh—Return to Tabreez—Departure for the Frontier—Sofian—Morand—Quarantine Stations—Djulfa 67

CHAPTER VIII.

Release from Quarantine—Nakhshivan—Mount Ararat —Kevrah—Russian Cossack Station—Night Marches —Armenian Harvest — Offerings of First Fruits—Christian Chapel—Erivan 78

CHAPTER IX.

Russian Post-waggon—Armenian Convent of Etchmiadzin — Monkish Legends — Festival of the Virgin—Blessing the First-Fruits of the Vineyards—St. Gregory Loosavorich — Synod — Armenian Archbishop—Return to Erivan 91

CHAPTER X.

Page

Rendamal — Prince Bebutoff — Zengui River—Russian Dinner — Lake of Goukcha — Chiboukloo — Pass of Dilijan—Colonel Espejo 100

CHAPTER XI.

Bibis—Colonel Berens—Russian Magistrates— Kour or Cyrus—Soghanloo—Tiflis—Baron Rosen—Best Hotel —Countess Simonich—Monsieur Rodofinikin . 112

CHAPTER XII.

Sunday Parade—German Church—Colony of New Tiflis — Governor-General's Levee — Georgian Women — Russian Carriages—Peter Ney—Warm Baths—French Consul—Origin of the German Colonies . . 123

CHAPTER XIII.

Departure from Tiflis—Post-horses—Mtskheta—Aragvi —Douzethi — Unlucky Detention — Cossack Singing — Ananouri — Pasanaouri — Cashaour — Dangerous Passes—Kobi—Drunken Post-Master—Mount Kasbek —Pass of Dariel—Vladikawkas 133

CHAPTER XIV.

March across the Kabarda—Escort—Kabardans—Chechenses — Heavy Post—Ardonskoi — Ekaterinograd— Cossacks of the Line—Stanitzas—Georgievsk—Capital Posting—Petigorsky—Colony of Karras—Mr. Dittrich —German Pastors 144

CHAPTER XV.

Page

Kislavodsky—Acid Spring—Fortunate Rencontre—Russian Family—Cold Bath—Drunken Cossack—Return to Petigorsky—Colony of Karras—Comfortable Quarters—Songs of the Don—Circassian Converts—Ferruginous Springs—Circassian Forays . . . 158

CHAPTER XVI.

Return to Ekaterinograd—Opportune Arrival of a Courier—Recross the Kabarda—Supper at Vladikawkas—Passage of the Caucasus—Express from Tiflis—Arrival at the German Colony 169

CHAPTER XVII.

Old Schoolfellow—Soirée at the Baroness Rosen's—Change of Quarters—General Valkhovsky—Hospitality—Baron Dieskau—State of the German Colonies—Censorship—Books—Gymnasium—Formal Party—Church of New Tiflis 177

CHAPTER XVIII.

Departure for Kakheti—Markobi—Telav—Georgian Prince—Seclusion of the Women—Forest Scenery—Cossack Pickets—Vintage—Wine of Kakheti—Intemperance of the Georgians—Signak . . . 188

CHAPTER XIX.

Rencontre with the Nijni-Novogorod Dragoons—Bivouac—Colonel Besobrasoff—Brass Band—Wet March—Circassian Prince—"Lesghian Dance"—German Colony of Marienfeld—Officers of the Dragoons—Polish Count—Arrival at Tiflis 197

CHAPTER XX.

Page

Prince Souvoroff — German Professor — Soirée at the Palace — Latin Conversation — Grand Parade — Baroness Hahn—Russian Customs—Petersburg Guardsmen — Missionary Labours among the Armenians—Princess Madatoff 210

CHAPTER XXI.

Wet Sunday—Dinner at Baron Hahn's—Russian Equipages—Suspicion of the Russian Authorities—A Brother Englishman—War with the Circassians—Attack of Fever and Ague—Arrival of the Emperor—Heir-Apparent of Persia 219

CHAPTER XXII.

Levee of the Emperor—Sudden Change of Profession—Body Guard of Georgian Princes—Dinner at Baron Hahn's—Emperor's Staff—Victor Hugo—Grand Review — Dinner at the Palace—Illuminations—English Tea-table 229

CHAPTER XXIII.

Parade—Act of Justice—Grand Ball—Georgian Women—Dancing—Princess Katinka * * * * *—Supper . 244

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Emperor quits Tiflis—The Imperial Carriage Upset—Family Dinner — Parade of the Dragoons — Aga Meer Futteh—Princess Katinka * * * * * —Arab Mares—Preparations for Departure—A Literary Lady—Comfortable Quarters—Farewell Visits—Dinner at Baron Hahn's 253

CHAPTER XXV.

Page

Departure from Tiflis — Cossack Journey — Arrival at Goomri — Russian Commandant — New Fortress — Cross the Frontier—Armenian Officer—Haji Velli . 268

CHAPTER XXVI.

Turkish Hospitality — Snow-storm — Ruins of Anni—Scene of Desolation — Christian Churches — Koordish Shepherd—Caves 282

CHAPTER XXVII.

Armenian Quarters—Signs of Winter—Town of Kars —Wretched Quarters—Russian Vice-Consul—Turkish Cavass—American Scene—Pass of Soghanloo Dagh—Pilgrims—Stable Scene 292

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Araxes — Shepherd's Bridge — Hassan Kaleh — Tatar Travelling — Reach Erzeroum — British Consul—Visit to the Seraskier Pasha — Disgrace of the Seraskier—News from Persia—A Little Friend—Trade of Erzeroum —Horses—Warnings to Depart 306

CHAPTER XXIX.

Departure from Erzeroum — Ertepeh—Common Room —Curious Escort — Mountain Pass — Armenian Villages—Dangerous Country—Armenian Burying-grounds —Koordish Encampment — Mourad, or Euphrates—Wretched Accommodation—Moush—Message from the Pasha 319

CHAPTER XXX.

Page

Plain of Moosh—Arkavank—Flocks of Cranes—Xenophon's Description of the Armenians—Bitlis—Sheriff Beg — Koordish Stable—Lake of Van—Tedavan — Sipan Dagh—Water of the Lake 332

CHAPTER XXXI.

Convent and Island of Aghtamar—Khan Mahmoud—Castle of Pasvakh—Vastan—Artemid—Legends of the Sipan Dagh—Van—Armenians—Pasha of Van—Ibrahim Tatar 344

CHAPTER XXXII.

Fortress of Van—Professor Schultz—Arrow-headed Inscriptions—Pasha's Apartments — Nestorians — Ibrahim's Impudence — Servants of the Pasha —Alchek —Long March—Kotoor—Cross the Persian Frontier. 356

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Deep Snow—Plain of Salmas—Lake of Urumiah—Kolingi—City of Urumiah —American Missionaries—Nestorians —American Customs—Missionaries—Nestorius 367

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Departure from Urumiah—Nestorian Wedding-Procession —A Row—Koordish Village—Disastrous Adventure—Shishawan — Malek Kossim Mirza—Ramazan — Mr. Merrick—Mahomedans 377

CHAPTER XXXV.

Page

A Vicious Horse—Calcareous Springs—Deh-Khargan—Arrival at Tabreez—News from Tehran—Progress of the Siege of Herat—Mahommed Khan Keraia . 391

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Departure from Tabreez—Unfavourable Reports—Whirlwinds of Snow—Stumbling Horses—Excessive Cold—The Haji's Carts—The Shah's Cab—Dark Night—A Runaway Horse—Arrival at Tehran—Merry Christmas 401

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Departure of the Ambassador for Herat—Wild-Boar Hunt—Ruins of Verormeen—"Mirza Aboul Hassan Khan's Villa" 410

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Moharrem—Astalak—Demawend—Firuzkoh—Hyrcanian Tiger—Palace of the "White Genius"—Surkhrobat—Zirab 420

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Shah Abbas's Causeway—Mazanderan Roads—Vegetation on the Shores of the Caspian—Aliabad—Jackals—Sari—The Eelbeggee—Boar Hunt—Bay of Ashraff—Sefiabad 433

CHAPTER XL.

Page

Ashraff—Mazanderani Connoisseurs—View from Sefiabad—Sefaveean Palaces—The "Grey Wind"—Shah Abbas the Great—Kara Tuppeh—Shores of the Caspian—Ferah-Abad—Salmon-fishing 447

CHAPTER XLI.

Russian Fishery—Sail on the Caspian—Packet from England—Babul River—Meshedi Ser—Balfurush—The Island Palace—Ardisheer Mirza—Persian Andarun 459

CHAPTER XLII.

Amul—Heraz River—Dangerous Pass—Caves of Aroo—Mount Demawend—Ah—Difference of Taste—Arrival at Tehran 470

LIST OF PLATES.

Mount Ararat to face the Title.
Plain of Tehran . . . . . Page 4
Sultaniah 55
Dariel 141
Summer Palace and Mosque near Tehran . . . 423
Map at the end.

TRAVELS

IN THE

ERRATA.

Page	27,	line	9,	*for* Firuzgoh *read* Firuzkoh.
„	349,	„	1,	*for* arising *read* rising.
„	438,	„	22,	*for* local *read* level.
„	452,	„	16,	*for* Safaveean *read* Sefaveean.
„	476,	„	19,	*for* foot-pace *read* footspace.

wishes of the British Government, the officers attached to the service of the Shah were

TRAVELS

IN THE

TRANS-CAUCASIAN PROVINCES OF RUSSIA,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

Rupture of the Negotiations between Persia and Herat—British Camp at Goolahek—Palace of the Nigaristan—Description of Tehran.

TOWARDS the close of July, 1837, the long-protracted negotiations between Persia and Herat having been suddenly broken off, and the Affghan ambassador having quitted Tehran on his return to his own country, the Persian army, already assembled round the capital, received orders to commence its march to the eastward.

This expedition having been undertaken in direct opposition to the views and expressed wishes of the British Government, the officers attached to the service of the Shah were

of course precluded from accompanying the army. Seeing no prospect of employment for the remainder of the year, and being anxious to escape from the intolerable heat of Tehran, I availed myself of so favourable an opportunity of visiting the interesting countries lying between the Caspian and the Black Sea. Having procured the necessary passports from the British and Russian ambassadors, I sent forward by easy stages such of my horses as I required for the journey, intending to overtake them before their arrival at Tabreez.

So early as the middle of May the British officers residing at the capital had accompanied the ambassador to the little village of Goolahek, situated on a table land, sloping gradually towards the lofty range of the Shemeroon mountains, at a distance of six or seven miles from Tehran. Goolahek had been assigned to us by the Shah, as a summer residence for the embassy, and forms one of the thick cluster of villages known

by the name of "Shemeroon," which during the summer months are the favourite resort of the wealthy of Tehran. During the day-time, indeed, the heat even here was excessive, for Goolahek contained no houses capable of accommodating so large a party, and our tents, pitched on the rising ground above the village, afforded us a poor shelter against the scorching rays of the sun, which beat through the folds of the canvass with oppressive force. For days together I have seen the glass stand at upwards of 100° in our tents, without a breath of wind to cool the air, and often did I wish myself in Tehran again beneath the protecting shade of my own substantial roof. But the delicious evenings amply compensated for the discomforts of the day, for, while a heavy vapour hung above the low and unhealthy plain causing the stifling feel of the sirocco, at Shemeroon a gentle breeze invariably sprang up as soon as the sun had sunk behind the overhanging mountains.

Awaiting with impatience this welcome moment, we mounted our horses, or sauntered idly along the bank of the little stream, enjoying the deep and grateful shade of the mountain, while the plain below us still basked in the broad glare of sunshine. The rich warm tints which at this hour overspread both plain and mountain were often beautiful, varying at each moment, and chequered by the long purple shadows of evening. At length the whole landscape lay in shade; the last rays of the setting sun lingered yet a moment on the snowy peak of Demawend, and the short twilight of a southern clime soon deepened into night.

The Shah was at this time residing in the Nigaristan, or picture-gallery, a summer palace embedded among groves of poplar and oriental plane, and lying within half a mile of the Shemeroon gates. Immediately around the precincts of the garden stood the pavilions of the Vizier and the principal officers of state, beyond which, on either side, lay the

THE PLAIN AND CITY OF TEHERAN, FROM SHEMEROON.

irregular encampments of the Nizam, or disciplined troops.

Along the banks of the small stream which supplied the royal garden were picketed in long lines the horses of the irregular cavalry, while their hardy riders found a sufficient shelter beneath the stunted willows which grew upon the margin of the brook, or formed a rude tent of horse-cloths supported by their long rifles. On the outskirts of the camp numerous strings of mules and baggage-horses were ranged in squares around their loads, while hundreds of camels were allowed to roam at large, gathering a scanty nourishment from a low prickly shrub dotted here and there on the barren plain. Not a blade of grass nor a single tree tempered the force of the noonday sun, and if perchance a breeze arose, columns of dust would sweep across the plain, blinding and half suffocating all who stood in their line.

The plain of Tehran is ill-selected for the site of the capital; and motives of policy could

alone have determined the removal of the Persian court from the once magnificent but now neglected city of Isfahan, the brilliant capital of the Sefaveean dynasty.

When Aga Mahommed Khan, the uncle and predecessor of the late King Fatteh Ali Shah, after a long and murderous contest, had succeeded in raising himself to the throne of Persia, he fixed his residence at Tehran on account of its vicinity to the shores of the Caspian, the seat of his own tribe; and neither of his successors has thought fit to restore the seat of government to the more central and healthy, as well as more beautiful site where it had formerly been established. I have heard it asserted, indeed, that the country round Isfahan, now that the once numerous aqueducts have fallen into ruins, would with difficulty furnish the supplies necessary to so great an increase of its population; but I imagine a more powerful reason to exist in the turbulent and disaffected temper of the Isfahanis, who, in common with all native Per-

sians, cannot conceal their dislike to the Turkish origin and customs of the royal tribe.*

Tehran stands in the centre of a barren and extensive plain, bounded on three sides by arid mountains, while, to the southward, a succession of low ranges, over which leads the road to Isfahan, separates the plain from the great salt desert of Yezd. To the north-west, the high chain of the Shemeroon hills, rarely, if ever, entirely free from snow, divides the province of Irak from the dense woods of Mazanderan (the ancient Hyrcania), and abounds in clear streams, which, after fertilizing the numerous villages scattered along its base, flow through the plain and supply the city. High above this chain, at a distance of about forty miles from Tehran, stands the lofty mountain of Demawend, whose conical

* The population of the present capital amounts, probably, to about 70,000 souls when the Shah is residing there. The absence of the court makes a difference of, I should think, at least one-fifth of the whole number of inhabitants.

peak, clad with eternal snow, bears evidence of extinct volcanic fires. Demawend has been considered a connecting link between the Caucasus and the gigantic chain of the Himalaya, and, in common with the former, sometimes bears the name of Elburz. Its height is nearly 15,000 feet above the sea, far beyond the limit of perpetual snow, but in summer the ascent is neither perilous nor difficult. Near the summit are caves of sulphur. To the south-east of the city, at a distance of about three miles, stand the massive, but shapeless ruins of the ancient city of Rhé, not, as has often been supposed, the Rhages of Scripture, some vestiges of which may be seen farther to the eastward, but celebrated as the burying-place of Haroun Alraschid. These ruins cover a vast extent of ground, and on the rocky range, at the foot of which they lie, may be traced the interrupted lines of extensive fortifications.

Tehran is surrounded by a mud wall and dry ditch, between four and five miles in cir-

cumference, flanked at intervals by circular towers, little higher than the wall itself. Five gates of brickwork, ornamented with coloured tiles, open upon the principal roads, and are carefully closed soon after sunset. Nothing can well be imagined less imposing than the external appearance of the capital of Persia. The mass of low houses, all of clay or sun-dried brick, is scarcely visible above the wall; here and there a low cupola, or a broken pillar, rising above the terrace roofs, peers from among formal rows of poplar and chunar, but the eye misses the splendid mosques and the numerous taper minarets with which every town of Turkey and Asia Minor is adorned. Within the scene is still less attractive: narrow lanes, for they are not worthy of the name of streets, choked with heaps of rubbish, and full of open drains, which threaten to break your horse's legs, wind between dead walls, which jealously exclude the gaze of the passer by from the courts which they enclose, and upon which every window opens. Under the shadow of these walls lie the most loathsome

figures—men, women, and children, imploring the charity of the passer by. Nor do the Bazaars present that gay and varied picture which meets the eye in those of Turkey, where the native of each country retains his national costume.

Here, with the occasional exception of a group of Arabs, or of turbaned Koords, all, whether Persians, Georgians, or Armenians, have adopted the graceful, but sombre dress of the country; the women, wrapped from head to foot in their dark cloaks, which quite conceal all charms of face and figure, do not contribute to enliven the scene. Tehran boasts of no spacious squares or princely palaces like those of the great Abbas at Isfahan; the Maidan, or open space in front of the palace, is choked with rubbish, and surrounded by paltry buildings. A few old guns of every form and calibre, mounted on broken carriages, line either side of the principal gateway, while, in the centre of the square, on a high pedestal of brickwork, stands a curious piece of brass ordnance, round which I have

often seen the discontented troops assert the privileges of sanctuary. The pedestal is usually the stage of some wandering Dervish. In the corner of the Maidan stands the state carriage of the Shah, an ancient chariot, the gift of some European ambassador; on which has accumulated the venerable dust of years. Four ragged horses with gun-harness, and ridden by artillerymen, draw this crazy vehicle, which never moves beyond a foot's pace.

The palace itself consists of a vast number of distinct buildings, each with its courts and gardens, but without pretensions to architectural beauty. The lofty audience-chamber, which stands in the centre of an extensive garden laid out in formal avenues, is not unsuited to the somewhat gaudy brilliancy of an Oriental court; and on occasions of ceremony, when the Shah sits in state, surrounded by princes of the blood, and by all the nobles of the land, in their gorgeous dresses, while the spacious avenues are lined with troops, and

the bright eastern sun lights up the varied pageant, it requires no great stretch of the imagination to realise the enchanting descriptions of the Arabian Nights. But examine the scene in detail, and you will search in vain for objects worthy of your notions of Oriental splendour. The walls of unbaked brick, the roughly-hewn window-frames, and the ill-executed mosaic of mirrors and coloured porcelain look paltry and incongruous, while the perishable material of the whole, already falling into decay, forcibly contrasts with the durable and massive architecture of the palaces of Europe.*

* Soon after my arrival in Persia I was present at the festival of the "No-Roz," or new-year's-day, which is always celebrated with great pomp at the capital. We had been presented to the Shah before the opening of the public "salaam," or levee, and seats were assigned to us in a room adjoining the grand audience-chamber which overlooked the whole pageant. It was an imposing spectacle, but an unmannerly elephant contrived to turn it into ridicule, by filling his trunk from the tank near which he stood, and showering its contents upon a luckless poet who was in the act of reciting an ode in honour of the "centre of the universe."

CHAPTER II.

Persian Camp—Artillery—Regiments in Sanctuary—Audience of the Shah—Visit to the "Hajī."

A FEW days before the departure of the Shah I rode down to the Nigaristan, to attend his Majesty's levee: the troops had already commenced their march towards Khorassan, and a long line of guns, with horses ready harnessed, was drawn up in formidable array before the palace gates. Large stores of ammunition, carried on the backs of camels, and long strings of heavily-laden baggage cattle, were moving off the ground from every point.* On approaching the garden, I saw an unusual

* The Persian artillery is by far the most effective branch of their army, though, if we are to credit the account of their wonderful performances in the time of the late Prince Royal Abbas Mirza, they must have fallen off greatly in the last few years. Until within six months the words of command were invariably given in English, but English so mutilated as to be scarcely recognizable to the ears of an Englishman.

crowd and stir around the spot where the royal stud was picketed. Long rows of piled muskets surrounding the Persian standard announced that some regiment had taken refuge at the horses' heads, a sanctuary no less inviolable than that of the mosque. On inquiry, I found that two regiments of Affshars, the tribe of the celebrated Nadir Shah, had refused to march unless their colonel, with whom they were dissatisfied, were removed from his command. They had already been there for several days, and as their comrades supplied them with all they needed, it seemed probable that the Shah would be forced to acquiesce in their demands.

The public salaam had just broken up as I reached the principal entrance of the garden, and the courtiers, with their scarlet cloaks and lamb-skin caps, wound round with Kashmeer shawls, were sitting in groups under the shady elms, enjoying the luxury of the kalioun. Passing through an avenue of tall plane trees, I found the Shah seated in a small octagonal

summer-house, situated in the centre of the garden, and cooled by a clear stream, which, flowing through the building, formed beneath the dome a capacious basin. Four deep recesses, ornamented by fanciful representations of the feats of Rustam, and other heroes of Persia, fronted the cardinal points, and, according to the hour of the day, the carpets were spread in one or other of them. His Majesty was seated near the window supported by a pile of cushions, while a single attendant knelt behind him, waving a broad fan of feathers above his head. His dress was, as usual, perfectly simple, the richly-jewelled handle of his dagger alone betokened his rank. His age does not exceed one or two and thirty, but his thick beard and heavy figure make him appear an older man: his countenance is rather handsome, and, except when his anger is excited, of a prepossessing and good-humoured expression: his manner, especially towards Europeans, is extremely affable: he generally speaks Turkish, the language of

his tribe, but, both in that and in Persian, his enunciation is so rapid that it requires some practice to understand him. Compared with the generality of Asiatics, the Shah is a man of considerable energy, and by no means deficient in information: he is well versed in the history of his own country, and has a tolerably correct idea of the geography and political state of Europe. His army is his hobby, and to his thirst for military fame he sacrifices both his own ease and comfort, and the welfare and prosperity of his country.* His court is far inferior in style and splendour to that of his grandfather and predecessor, the principal offices of state being occupied by men of low origin, deficient in that magnificence and courtliness of manner which formerly distinguished the Persian noble. The late king was always attended by a numerous and gal-

* I have heard this expedition against Herat often attributed by Persians to the circumstance of the Shah's having read a translation of Bourrienne's Memoirs of Napoleon, and thus become inoculated with the thirst for conquest.

lant retinue of princes of the blood, and officers of state, besides a crowd of inferior retainers; the present monarch often rides out with a few ill-mounted and worse appointed followers.

The Shah is a strict and conscientious Mussulman: he never indulges in the forbidden juice of the grape, an abstinence rare in the royal family, nor does he follow the universal practice of smoking. His harem, unlike that of his grandfather, the number of which exceeds all credibility, is within the limits prescribed by the Mahommedan law. Well would it have been for Persia had Fatteh Ali Shah been as moderate, for every government, however insignificant, was conferred upon one of his countless sons*, who drained the very heart's blood of the country. Since the accession of the present monarch the greater part of these have been removed, and

* Luti Ali Khan, the head buffoon of the late Shah, is said to be the only man in Persia who can repeat the names of them all.

many of them are now reduced to the utmost distress, living from hand to mouth by the sale of shawls and jewels, the relics of better days. Some of the late king's wives have passed into the harems of private individuals: others, who had amassed some property, live in their respective villages.

Mahommed Shah has two sons; the eldest, his destined successor, is now at Tabreez, under the care of Suleiman Khan, his maternal uncle. The mother of the boy was of the royal tribe. The second, who resides at Tehran, is a chubby little fellow, about three years old, the son of a Koordish woman.

Having answered some questions put to me by the King on military subjects, and recommended to his Majesty's notice several of the officers who had been under my command, I quitted the royal presence and repaired to the tent of "Haji Mirza Aghassi," the Grand Vizier, which communicates by a private door with the Nigaristan. The Haji, or pilgrim, as this important personage is always called,

from his having performed his devotions at the shrine of Mecca, is the most remarkable man that I have ever met with. He is by no means destitute of talent, but his words and actions are strongly tinctured with real or affected insanity. He is said to be deeply versed in the mysteries of Soofeeism, the wild theories of which, though incompatible with the religion of the Prophet, are daily extending the number of their votaries. The extraordinary degree in which he has possessed himself of the confidence of his sovereign, both as political and spiritual adviser, has rendered him almost omnipotent, and emboldens him to treat the ancient nobles, and even the princes of the royal family, with the utmost hauteur and coarseness, doubly galling to them from the lowness of his origin. The whole business of the state is transacted by him, and the other ministers of the Shah are mere instruments in his hands.

It is impossible to introduce any subject but the Haji immediately assures you that he

understands it more thoroughly than any man alive; and I have heard him utter the most consummate nonsense about military matters, while the whole assembly, with imperturbable gravity, agreed with all he said. On one occasion, some one having ventured to praise the generalship of Napoleon, the Haji sharply interrupted him, saying, "Napoleon! whose dog was Napoleon?" The good sayings attributed to the Haji would fill a volume, but unfortunately few of them would admit of repetition to ears polite.

His tent was as usual crowded: on either side of the great man, with the most punctilious regard to precedence, sat a long row of ministers, priests, and soldiers, whilst several secretaries, seated behind him, were writing dispatches, or presenting them to him for perusal and signature. The approaching departure of the army occupied every mind; and gholams, or couriers, ready booted for the journey, stood in readiness awaiting their orders to proceed to the different provinces

from whence new levies were to be summoned.

The Vizier is a short but athletic man, of about sixty, with a shrewd grey eye and a thin scanty beard*, the cause of much witty remark in a country where that appendage is cultivated with so much care. Until the accession of the present Shah the Haji filled a subordinate station in the household of the Prince Royal, and had something to do with the education of the reigning King. He was raised to his present dignity in 1835, when his predecessor, a bold and clever man, having excited, by his ambition, the jealousy of the monarch, met with the fate of the bowstring. He affects a great friendship for the English, overwhelming us frequently with expressions of regard, such as "My life," "My

* A Persian noble, in describing the Haji to the Ambassador, who had never seen him, completed his picture by saying—"He has five-and-twenty hairs in his beard;" and, marking the incredulous look of his listener, he added, "by your head it is true—I counted them myself!"

soul," "My ancient friend;" but it is almost hopeless to transact any business with him, for whenever the subject becomes disagreeable he turns the conversation to some other topic, and his ready-made promises are as readily broken.

After smoking the customary pipes accompanied by tea and coffee, I rode into the town to wait at the embassy, until the cool of the evening should enable me to return to Goolahek.

CHAPTER III.

British Palace — Bazaars — Daroga, or chief magistrate— Palace of the Kasr-i-Kajar—Persian Villas.

THE British palace was built by Sir Gore Ouseley, while ambassador in Persia, and, were it not situated in a low and unhealthy quarter of the town, would be one of the most desirable residences in Tehran. It is built in the European style, with the exception of the terraced roof: a portico running the whole length of the front opens upon a small garden, which in the spring contains a truly eastern profusion of the most beautiful roses: white and yellow, pink and crimson, single and double, vie with each other in brilliancy; but superior to them all in height and beauty stands the unrivalled Nasteran rose, the foliage almost concealed amidst clusters of white flowers. Avenues of alternate plane and cy-

press traverse the garden, and are a favourite haunt of the nightingale.

The sun was still high when I mounted my horse to return to the hills, and the shade of the vaulted bazaars was most grateful. Heaps of ice and snow, intermingled with large bowls of well-cooled sherbet, and a profusion of every variety of fruit, refreshed the eye, and collected round them all the idle of the quarter, to whom some wild-looking Dervish, with all the fire and energy of the Italian improvisatore, recounts some tale of wonder, or recites the splendid fictions of Ferdousi. The first bazaar through which my road lay was that of the coppersmiths, where the incessant din of hammers, re-echoed from the vaulted ceiling, stuns the passer by. A little farther, where the bazaar, branching off to the right and left, forms a small octagon, surmounted by a flattened dome, sits the Daroga, or principal magistrate, on a projecting balcony, surrounded by his myrmidons, and administering justice in the shape of the bastinado.

Not unfrequently, when returning at night from the embassy to my own house, have I heard from afar the cries of some unhappy culprit, whose offence, perhaps, was that of having been detected in a state of unorthodox drunkenness.

Emerging from the bazaar, you soon reach the city gates, where the watchful sentinels are usually squatted beside their arms, relieving the hardships of duty by the soothing weed of Shiraz, while their no less watchful comrades levy a toll in kind on each unfortunate peasant who drives his donkey-load of fruit or fuel to the market.

Half way between Tehran and Goolahek stands the palace of the "Kasr-i-Kajar," which, owing to its commanding situation, on the very brow of a low range of hills which overlook the plain, has from a distance rather an imposing effect. It is a square building, surrounded by a high mud wall, and all the rooms open upon a spacious court, in the centre of which is a large reservoir. The face

which fronts the city is surmounted by a small chamber, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country, and looking down upon the garden, which descends by successive terraces into the plain. This palace was built by the late King, but since his death has been deserted. Sometimes a wolf is turned out and hunted here by the soldiers, for the amusement of the Shah; and in autumn we not unfrequently find a woodcock or a hare among the vines. The garden is a favourite resort of Persian drinking parties, and on a summer's evening the wild and plaintive notes of the Persian lute may frequently be heard from among the trees*.

In Persia, with the exception, indeed, of

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* Immediately on ascending to the table land on which the palace stands, the change of temperature is perceptible, and the ride from thence to Goolahek is far from unpicturesque. To the left of the road flows a little stream, bordered by shady willows, while the distant villages, imbedded in groves of the deepest foliage, stand out in bold relief against the arid mountains.

those provinces which border on the Gulf, the nights are generally cool, and so long as this is the case, one can submit, with comparative impunity, to any degree of heat during the day. In the northern provinces, indeed, the sudden change is too violent to be either healthy or agreeable. I remember, when first I joined the Shah's camp on the plain of Firuzgoh in 1836, the hottest days of August were succeeded by evenings so cold as to force us to have recourse to our cloaks. During many months of the year nine-tenths of the population sleep in the open air, usually on the terraces of their houses, and so dry is the climate that no bad effects are ever felt from this exposure.

The villas of the principal inhabitants of Tehran are scattered along the base of the Shemeroon mountains, adjoining the villages of their respective lords. Within the high walls of the garden, usually at the farthest extremity, are the apartments of the women, which generally consist only of a few small

rooms built of mud, without doors or windows, the want of which is scarcely felt during the summer months. Near the gate of the garden the master of the house pitches his tent beneath the shade of a clump of elms, which are carefully trained and grafted, that they may throw that deep cool shade so prized in eastern climates. Here he will sit from morning till night by the side of some sparkling stream, if there be one in the vicinity, or if not, on the margin of an artificial tank, for the sight of water seems necessary to his enjoyment.

The villa of "Mirza Abool Hassan Khan," who was sent on an embassy to England some thirty years ago, and who picked up during his residence there some notions of comfort, is rather better planned and more carefully kept than those of the generality of his countrymen; but the old man has wisely abstained from attempting to introduce into Persia the expensive luxuries of England; and I feel sure that he would not exchange his naked

plastered walls for the most princely of our baronial castles, at the price of losing the cloudless sky of his native country, which creates out of the simple materials of Nature scenes so much more grateful to his senses.

CHAPTER IV.

Society in Persia—Literature—Persian Retainers—Freedom of the Women—Beauty of the Women—Persian Children—Etiquette—Public Character of the Persians—Revenue of the Country—Mode of Living—Smoking—Newspaper—Freedom of Speech.

THE members of the British embassy and the officers attached to the service of the Shah have always entered much into the society of the Persians, and the personal influence which they have acquired by this intercourse strengthens materially our position in the country. It is very gratifying to see how high the British character stands in the estimation of the natives, and how implicit is their confidence in the word of an Englishman. The society of the educated classes is well worth cultivating, but it requires a deeper acquaintance with the idiom of the language than I can pretend to, in order to enter thoroughly into the spirit of their conversation. They are generally quick and lively in their

manner, full of wit and repartee, and apt in their quotations from their favourite poets. They are rarely conversant with the history and geography of other countries, their prose literature being almost exclusively confined to the annals of their own monarchs, and to books of science mostly written in Arabic, the language of the learned throughout the East, as Latin was of the West during the middle ages. Their ignorance of the habits and customs of Europe often appears to us ridiculous, yet it is scarcely more so than that of a large proportion of our own enlightened countrymen with regard to those of the East. They are ready to adopt many of our customs, and had they enjoyed half the means of intercourse with Franks that their neighbours, the Turks, have enjoyed, I think that they would before now have become half Europeans themselves. In Tabreez you will find almost every house of the better sort furnished with tables and chairs, and other articles of European comfort.

Persians of all classes are devotedly fond of society, and, when we consider how few resources they possess within themselves, we shall not wonder that they should so soon tire of their own company. Their beautiful climate (for beautiful it is to them who do not mind the heat, which to us appears excessive) contributes much to their sociability, by enabling them to spend the larger portion of their time in the open air; and you scarcely find a village, however small, which has not its shady seat, where all the idle congregate and discuss the topic of the day. The general courtesy, so remarkable among Asiatics, is very pleasing to witness, and it is impossible not to contrast it with the clashing selfishness so apparent in those busy communities where every one is eagerly intent upon his individual pursuits. Living a life of indolence, free from care and rivalry, the Persian's only thought is to enjoy the passing hour. His pleasures are few and simple, such as those around him are welcome to share in, for the habits of the higher classes

differ in little from those of their inferiors. Although the precedence due to rank and office is scrupulously exacted, the intercourse between all ranks is familiar and unrestrained, and the wandering Dervish will enter without ceremony the tent or chamber of the Vizier, and join freely in the conversation. The attachment displayed by the retainers of the Persian nobles towards their lord, and the kindness with which they are treated by him, has often reminded me of the devotion of the Scottish clansmen towards their chief, and speaks highly in favour of both parties. Their treatment of their slaves is another proof of the natural kindliness of the Persian disposition. Many of these old servants are regarded quite in the light of friends, and I have frequently seen them standing near their lords, with folded arms, listening to all that was said, and often giving their opinion unasked. I remember being very much struck with a scene which occurred at the table of Mr. Ellis,

our ambassador in Persia in 1836. One of the sons of the late Shah was the ambassador's guest, together with several other Persians. During dinner the prince handed a goblet of wine to his confidential retainer, who stood behind him; the man refused it, saying "Who am I that I should drink in the presence of your highness?" The prince repeating the offer, answered "You are my friend." The man still demurred; when the prince exclaimed "You are my brother." The man then took the cup, and turning away, quaffed off its contents.

Among themselves the conversation of Persians is free and licentious in the extreme; but they have the tact to perceive that such language is highly disagreeable to Europeans, and, except when they have exceeded the bounds of sobriety (no very unusual occurrence especially among the highest ranks), I have rarely found their conversation offensive. The language of the ladies is scarcely more

decorous; and a vast improvement is necessary in their manners, before their admission into society would contribute to its refinement.

Persian women are by no means subjected to that close confinement of which we generally suppose them the victims. It is true that they are not allowed to mix in the society of men; and, so strictly is this rule adhered to, that, although the husbands may be neighbours, and living on the most intimate terms, they scarcely know each other's wives by sight. Only the nearest relations of a woman are permitted to see her unveiled. Without doors their liberty is almost unrestrained; for, under cover of the dark-blue "chadder" (literally, sheet) worn by all women, they may pass unrecognised even by their husbands. I have heard some Persians assert that they could discover any of their own wives among a thousand; but, if the woman were desirous of concealment, I doubt not that she would evade the scrutiny of the most jealous eye. They are, indeed, supposed to be accompa-

nied by their eunuchs; but these guardians are not incorruptible, and intrigue is carried on to an incredible extent. The scenes of depravity which are well known to have taken place in the crowded harem of the late monarch are too revolting to be alluded to.

The principal resort of women of all classes is the bath, where they spend the livelong day, beguiling the tedious process of dyeing the hair and eyebrows with coffee and the kalioun. On high days and festivals they wander among the grave-yards — the usual promenade of an eastern city; or, mounting their horses, sally forth to the holy village of "Shah Abdul-Azeem," which lies a mile or two beyond the ruins of Rhé. On every Thursday, the eve of their Sabbath, this road is crowded; but the greater portion of these fair pilgrims seem bent on pleasure rather than devotion.

As far as I can learn from those whose medical profession gives them an access to the harems of the great, beauty is by no

means common in Persia; though, judging from the very lovely children I have seen, the young Persian girls must sometimes be objects worthy of a poet's dream. The soft yet brilliant eye, shaded by long, dark lashes—the clear, transparent brown of their complexion, and their delicate features, half-concealed amid a profusion of glossy ringlets, constitute a style of beauty peculiar to the East, and perhaps unrivalled in any country. But this beauty is short-lived: a trying climate and early marriage soon age the eastern woman; and, before the beauty of the European has reached its full development, hers has completely fled.

The Mahomedan law limits the number of lawful wives to four; but few, except those in the highest ranks, avail themselves of this license. In many families, especially among the tribes, they limit themselves to one; and none but the wealthy can afford to maintain several distinct establishments. The honour of an alliance with the Shah is generally un-

welcome, and sometimes deprecated, though it is not easy to decline it without giving offence.

It is melancholy to witness the fine talents with which the Persian children are so liberally gifted, and to think how sadly they will be wasted or misapplied. Their education, indeed, is not neglected; on the contrary, their studies commence earlier, and are far more severe, than those of English boys; but the immoral atmosphere which they breathe from their very cradle, and the debasing influence of the religion in which they are instructed, forbid the hope that they may rise superior to the degeneracy of their fathers. In manner they are far beyond their age; and I have seen a young boy of ten or twelve, in the absence of his father, receive and entertain his guests with all the tact and dignity of a courtier.

In a country where etiquette is so much studied, the question of precedence becomes one of great importance, and often gives rise

to ludicrous scenes. On entering a "majlis," or assembly, the Persian casts his eye round the company, and, having ascertained his place, walks straight across the room; and, however crowded the party may be, drops into it, without apology to his neighbours. If his place be not determined, he seats himself as high as he thinks it likely he will be allowed to remain without being ejected. Even in the "andaroon," or ladies' apartments, considerable etiquette is observed among the members of the same family. At dinner, for instance, it is not considered proper for the husband to eat out of the same dish with his wife; nor may the son caress his child in the presence of his father. He may not, indeed, even seat himself in his presence without permission.

In public life the Persian is characterised by a total disregard for truth and honesty, which is the main cause of the misgovernment of the country. Feeling how slight his tenure of office is, every man in authority, from the

governor to his meanest delegate, strives, by every method, to amass sufficient wealth against the evil day. Justice is sought in vain by those who approach their judge empty-handed; and the light taxation of the crown becomes a grievous burden when the collection passes through so many greedy hands.

The revenue of Persia, at the present time, amounts to no more than six crores of tomauns —equal to a million and a half of our money; and every year it is becoming more difficult to levy even this sum. Since the accession of the present Shah, the revenue has always been anticipated; although the troops are more than one or even two years in arrears of pay, and all the public officers and pensioners of the State complain that they cannot obtain the payment of their salaries. Bills on the Persian exchequer, though stamped with the King's own seal and those of his principal ministers, are little better than blank paper, except in the hands of the few who have the

power to enforce their payment. The treasurer makes a bill payable in a certain district or government; but probably the taxes of that district have already been paid; and, unless the governor be a particular friend of the man who holds the bill, or he himself have a strong interest in the country, all applications will be fruitless. I have seen a man of the highest rank, while accompanying the ambassador as mehmandar, detained several days at a large town before he could procure the payment of a bill, which did not amount to one hundred pounds. Besides the pressure occasioned by the smallness of the revenue and the difficulty experienced in its collection, the Persian government is further hampered by the indemnity which was granted to Russia at the close of the last war, and a portion of which still remains unpaid. The exaction or remission of this portion is made the alternative of the line of policy adopted by the Shah, and gives to Russia a powerful control over his councils. It is also a well-known fact that several of the

ministers are in the pay of that government.

Even in the few years that I have been in Persia, I can perceive a falling-off in the style of living of the nobles of the land. Their retinues have dwindled down to a few shabby followers; their palaces and villas are falling into ruin for want of timely repairs; and their ostentatious hospitality has almost disappeared. Still more strikingly is this the case with the members of the royal family, some of whom I have seen in the streets attended by a single servant—a galling situation to a Persian's pride. Most of them may yet be seen, mounted on a tall, old horse, of a figure now scarcely known in Persia, where horse as well as man seems to be daily degenerating.

The expenses of a Persian establishment are very trifling, owing to the extreme cheapness of the necessaries of life, and to the simple wants of the Persians. The greater portion of the higher classes possess villages, within a day or two's journey of the capital,

and draw from thence their supplies of wheat and barley and straw: they keep their fifteen or twenty mules; and, when they do not themselves require them, they either let them out, or send them to the provinces bordering upon the Caspian to fetch rice or fuel—a part of which they can sell for sufficient to cover all the expense of that which they retain for their own use. Their servants receive scarcely any wages, being merely clothed and fed: so that there is very little outlay of money, excepting for their dress; and even that is in some measure diminished by the custom which prevails of bestowing shawls and brocades upon every man of note at the festival of the "No Roz," or new year. At Tehran this is done by the Shah; in the provinces, by their respective governors.

The establishments of Europeans, who pay their servants regular wages, and purchase everything they require in the public market, are, of course, conducted on a far more expensive scale: yet, considering the number

of horses and servants which it is necessary to keep in Persia, the expenditure is by no means large. In a Persian household the superintendence of the kitchen is the peculiar department of the females, who pride themselves upon the excellence of their pillaus, and the delicate flavour of their various kinds of sherbet. I have tasted some of the former, which were, indeed, exquisite; but I must confess that I never yet drank any species of sherbet which would reconcile me to the loss of my first glass of sherry at dinner. By blending the comforts and luxuries of European and Asiatic living, we English improved both our houses and our table. Without banishing the "pillau" and the "kabab," we admitted the joint and the steak; and, while we retained the soft, thick carpets of Persia, we introduced into our rooms the sofa and the arm-chair. At the same time, without sacrificing our national costume, we adopted some articles of Persian dress far superior to our own both in comfort and appearance. The loose "shal-

war" was rendered necessary by the attitude in which we were frequently obliged to sit, and the slipper was gladly adopted in place of the boot; but the custom of wearing, in summer as well as winter, in the house as well as out, the high cap of Bokhara lamb-skin, was not so agreeable..

The Persian mode of smoking has been approved of by almost every European who has resided in the country; and, if I could fancy tobacco in any shape, it certainly would be in that of the kalioun, or water-pipe. The delicate flavour of the Shiraz tobacco, after passing through the water, is grateful to the taste; and the kalioun has the great advantage of not impregnating your dress and furniture with the sickening fumes of tobacco. Nor is the kalioun so great a promoter of idleness as the Turkish chibouque or the German meerschaum, since it is brought in at intervals, and only half-a-dozen mouthfuls inhaled. Much courtesy is displayed in the offer of your kalioun to your neighbours; but

an European should be cautious to whom he offers his, since many are still so bigoted as to refuse the pipe of an infidel.

A lithographic press has been established of late years in Tehran, which, in judicious hands, might be made productive of much good. Within the past year a newspaper has been printed in the capital, containing little beyond a few extracts from Galignani on subjects of general information; and sometimes, by the Haji's permission, a word or two on domestic occurrences, such as the arrival or departure of an envoy, the conferring of knighthood upon some Persian officer, or such like matters. It is published once a-month; but it is not very regular.

I have often been astonished at the exceeding freedom of speech in which the Persians indulge when discussing the conduct of the Shah and of his ministers, in the presence not only of their intimate friends, but of strangers and servants. An eastern despotism, although its acts may be, and sometimes are,

arbitrary and tyrannical, has at least this advantage over the absolute governments of the West, that it rarely takes notice of the opinions of its subjects. In Georgia, at a Russian party, I have heard the master of the house check the conversation in the most abrupt manner, because the propriety of some unimportant measure of the government happened to be called in question by one of his guests.

CHAPTER V.

Departure of the Court and Camp—Commencement of Journey—Palace of Sulimaniah—Casveen—Population of Persia—Want of water—Travelling by night—Sultaniah—The "Grey wind."

Before the close of the month the whole army had quitted Tehran, and such of the nobles as had been able to procure exemption from the fatigues and burden of the campaign, had retired to their villages. The city now looked quite deserted, and the Ambassador proposed spending a few weeks among the mountains, on the banks of a small river which promised ample sport to the angler. After sundry vain attempts to persuade any of the party to accompany me to Georgia, I therefore determined to begin my long and solitary journey.

Shortly before my departure our monthly despatches arrived from Constantinople, and I received the notification of my promotion

to the rank of lieutenant-colonel during the period of my service in Persia. This intelgence was doubly welcome to me at the present moment, since military rank is the best passport to civility in Russia.

It being advisable at this season to travel during the night, I quitted Tehran some hours before dawn on the 1st of August, and, skirting the base of the Shemeroon hills until they bend abruptly to the westward, daylight overtook me near the palace of Sulimaniah, a favourite residence of the late Shah, who had intended founding a city on the banks of the river Karrij, which issues at this point from a gorge of the mountains. I passed without halting between the palace and the extensive gardens, for the post-house had lately been transferred to Sangarabad, three hours farther. On my first journey to Tehran, in 1836, I had taken up my quarters in the palace; and my travelling companion, who was suffering from the effects of a severe kick, had been so pleased with the place, that he had remained

there several days. The weather was then, as now, oppressively hot; and the spacious, airy chambers of the palace, looking out upon beds of roses and fountains of clear water, offered a tempting resting-place to the weary traveller. It was not, indeed, without regret that I urged my unwilling horse past the gateway, for the sun was already high and far across the plain. I could just descry the trees of Sangarabad.

From Sulimaniah to Casveen the country is totally devoid of interest, the road leading through the centre of an uninterrupted plain almost destitute of cultivation, owing to the want of water, for in this part of Persia nothing will grow without irrigation. In the neighbourhood of Casveen long lines of "canauts," or subterranean aqueducts, now choked with rubbish, intersect the plain, and bear evidence to the former cultivation of the district. On the other side of the hills which bound the plain of Casveen to the north flows a river which it was once thought practicable

to divert from its deep and rocky bed into the plain, which only requires irrigation to become as fertile as any part of Persia.

I have heard it doubted by those who are fully competent to judge, whether the population of Persia is on the decrease: numerous tracts of land, it is true, are now deserted which bear traces of former cultivation; but, on the other hand, in districts more removed from the main roads which traverse the country, new villages have sprung up. The destruction of a single aqueduct may oblige the inhabitants of a whole district to emigrate, while the opening of a new canaut gives instant birth to thriving villages. The effect of irrigation is almost magical: immediately adjoining the most barren tract may be seen rich vineyards and corn-fields, interspersed with orchards and walnut-trees of noble growth, which spring up wherever there is moisture with incredible rapidity, beneath the vivifying rays of an eastern sun. But still more rapid is their decay when the stream is

diverted from its channel, and one summer's drought suffices to efface the labour of years. It appears evident to me that that portion of Persia which constitutes the modern kingdom was never thickly peopled; though covering a considerable space upon the map, it now contains no more than seven millions of inhabitants; and, unless the system of Artesian wells could be adopted with success, I do not think that the country could support a much larger population. Every rivulet, however small, is made use of for the purpose of irrigation, and several considerable streams flowing from the north are completely dried up before they reach their natural outlet. The nomade habits of a large proportion of the population contribute to render the calculation difficult, and the Persian statements are so exaggerated that they afford no assistance.

Casveen was once the capital of Persia. I do not remember what monarch held his court there, for during the middle ages the seat of government was transferred successively to

almost every city of any note in the country. The walls enclose a large extent of ground, larger, I should think, than those of Tehran; but whole streets lie in ruins, and it contains no buildings of any note. Of the caravanserai where I halted, the gateway alone remains standing; but in summer the traveller needs only a corner for his carpet sheltered from the rays of the sun. The city lies in the midst of extensive vineyards, interspersed with olive-trees, reaching in some directions several miles beyond the walls, and famous for the flavour of their grapes. The wine of Casveen made by the Armenian inhabitants is better than that generally met with in Persia.

It was evening when I quitted Casveen: within a mile or two of the gates the road divided into two branches, the one leading through the middle of the plain, the other, or summer road, skirting the base of the hills. I had no choice, for I required post-horses for my servants, and the stations were all on the lower road. The night was very dark, and

we could with difficulty distinguish the narrow track—at times overgrown by low aromatic shrubs, which, bruised by our horses' hoofs, filled the atmosphere with a sickly perfume; at others lost in a broad bed of gravel or shifting sand. More than once we wandered from the path and dismounted from our horses to search for the print of hoofs, for in the East it is a serious inconvenience to stray from the right track. Hours—the valuable hours of night—may pass before you meet a soul to warn you of your error, and day-break is rapidly succeeded by excessive heat.

The European traveller is struck by the deep and unnatural stillness of a night-march across these plains: around him, as far as the faint starlight allows the eye to penetrate, stretches the apparently boundless plain, without a tree or dwelling to break the line of the horizon. The very air is hushed, and the tramp of his horse's hoofs is stifled in the sandy track. At intervals the low and measured tinkle of distant bells catches his ear:

THE SUMMER PALACE OF SULTANIAH.

it gradually draws nearer, and a long train of camels glides past him with noiseless tread.

At daylight on the 4th I found myself within an hour's march of the village of Sultaniah, once a considerable city, the only remains of which consist of a ruined mosque, whose lofty dome, once covered with blue tiles, is seen from a great distance. Some miles before reaching the town I passed between two heaps of stones, marking the spot to which the Governor of Sultaniah formerly repaired to receive the khalat, or dress of honour, sent him by the monarch. A little farther I met a large body of Koordish horsemen from the frontier, about to join the Persian army. Their gay costume, their long lances, and showy horses, gave them a soldierlike appearance. Unlike the Koords of Sennah, they did not wear either the helmet or chain-armour. A little beyond the village stands the "Amarat," or villa of Sultaniah, a large but rambling building on a low mount which rises abruptly from the plain. This was the

constant resort of the late king during the heats of summer, for the weather is never oppressive, and the extensive meadow stretching far in every direction is admirably adapted to the encampment of so large a body of regular and irregular troops as used always to accompany Futteh Ali Shah.

While the "grey wind" from the Caspian prevails, even a day in August may be cold: as I passed through, the sky above and around me was of a deep unbroken blue, except in the direction of the Caspian, where a heavy bank of cold grey mist reposed immoveably on the summit of the mountains. But though the mist advanced not beyond the mountain barrier, a raw wind swept across the plain, striking us with a sudden chill.

CHAPTER VI.

Persian Troops—Disorderly March—Unsoldierlike Appearance—Power of Endurance—Exactions of the Colonel—Punishments—Arrival at Tabreez.

I HAD cantered forward, attended by a single servant, with the view of reaching Zanjan before the gates were closed, when I met Hussein Khan, the adjutant-general of the army, on his way to join the Shah's camp, with two regiments from the province of Azerbeijan. He was riding an ambling mule, richly caparisoned, and looked so comfortable in his well-cushioned saddle that I quite envied him. A good travelling mule is very valuable in Persia, and will fetch from seventy to a hundred guineas. Their paces are most easy, and they will perform wonderful journeys.

The route of a Persian regiment may be traced by deserted villages, unroofed houses, and devastations of the most wanton nature.

Its march is more destructive in its own country than would be that of a hostile force; and the evil is daily increasing, since the long arrears of pay, and absence of commissariat, force the soldiers to supply their wants by plunder. Hard indeed is the lot of those whose villages lie near the main road! Many which a few years ago were rich and thriving are now heaps of ruins. The invasion of an enemy might cause a temporary abandonment of house and home, but a visitation, at all time impending, drives the poor peasant to despair, and he seeks a refuge in remoter valleys. Many of these villages are surrounded by a wall, and might resist the efforts of the troops to force an entrance; but, unless they belong to some man of influence, the fear of ulterior consequences deters them from so bold a measure. Often they bribe the commander to pass on to some other village, so that, between the proceeds of his plundering and these compositions for not plundering, he makes a profitable business of his march.

We had already met the advance of these regiments, straggling along the road without any attempt at order, and forming a motley caravan of camels, horses, mules, and donkeys, laden either with rice or corn from their villages, or more probably with their ill-gotten plunder. As the booty increases more cattle become necessary, and these heroes are by no means scrupulous as to the means of recruiting their commissariat. If it be your ill-luck to encamp in their vicinity, your grooms must be on the alert, or your stud in the morning will probably have decreased in number. The Persian donkey is the most patient of his much-enduring race. I have seen these poor little animals accompany for weeks the march of the army along the barren plains to the eastward of Tehran, bending under the double burden of a heavy load of corn surmounted by a hulking soldier, to whom some of his less fortunate comrades would intrust their rusty muskets. At the close of the march the poor slave received no other nou-

rishment than that which he could pick up while tethered in the neighbourhood of his master's tent: yet the proverbial rareness of the sight of a dead donkey was verified even here; for, while the bleached bones of many a horse and camel lined the road, I do not remember seeing a single dead donkey among the number.

Close to the gates of Zanjan I met the main body, a long and straggling column, ragged, half-armed, and half-disciplined. Fully more than half their number had preceded with the the baggage, and the drums and colours alone gave the column the semblance of a regiment. The scanty population of Persia, already insufficient for the cultivation of the soil, renders the recruiting of the army a matter of difficulty, and its ranks contain many unfit to wield the musket, either from extreme youth or from the more hopeless causes of sickness and decrepitude. Taken as a body, nothing can well be more unsoldierlike than the appearance of Persian troops, yet individually a

large proportion of the men are admirably adapted to support the toils and privations of Eastern warfare. Below the usual standard of European nations, these hardy tribesmen are athletic and well knit together, and possess a power of endurance which I have never seen equalled. They are wild-looking fellows, with their long beards and well-bronzed features, and would be more in character had they retained the bow and arrow of their warlike ancestors. Their usual dress when marching is a sheepskin coat with the wool turned inside, and over this they wear the European pouch and waist-belt. A conical cap of felt or coarse sheepskin, loose trousers, and boots of half-tanned leather bound round the leg, complete their equipment. Their muskets, which usually bear the Tower mark, and their bayonets, the chief use of which is to goad their donkeys, are rusty and almost unserviceable: many of the former are without locks. I shall never forget my astonishment,

on the day I was first presented to the Shah, at seeing the sentry over the very pavilion of the Asylum of the Universe shouldering a musket-barrel without either stock or lock.

The Persians are remarkably quick in learning their military duties, and I have always found them willing and obedient soldiers. I have seen them, indeed, driven by absolute starvation to acts of violence and insubordination, but I have oftener seen them submit with wonderful endurance to the severest privations. Their pay is frequently withheld for years, and their miserable rations of bread are served out with great irregularity. This evil is daily increasing, owing to the exhausted state of the exchequer, which is quite unequal to the heavy burden of so large a standing army. The best regiments that I have seen in Persia are raised among the tribes; but there exists one strong objection to this, inasmuch as they will yield obedience only to their own chief, and if he be disaf-

fected the regiment cannot be confided in. The duties of the interior of the palace are always performed either by a favourite regiment of the late Prince Royal, raised in the neighbourhood of Tabreez, or by a battalion of Russian deserters, under the command of one of their own countrymen.

The subordinate officers are usually men of little education, and their appointment is left to the choice of the colonel, who not unfrequently selects them from among his own personal retainers, and even after their promotion uses them almost as servants*. The nomination of field-officers requires the sanction of the Shah; but where the "sertib," or colonel, is the chief of the tribe, the lieutenant-colonelcy is invariably given to his brother, or some other relation. The command of a regiment is a very lucrative appointment, as, by making false returns, and by cheating as much as possible both the Government and

* In calling upon the colonel of a regiment, I have had my boots pulled off and my pipe presented to me by officers.

the soldier, the colonel generally contrives to fill his pockets*.

It is very difficult to make even a rough calculation of the force of the Persian Nizam, for I have seen some regiments which mustered a thousand strong, while others could not bring three hundred into the field. The strongest and best disciplined of these are the troops of Azerbeijan, who were raised and trained under the eye of Abbas Mirza, the late Prince Royal. Between these and the levies of the southern provinces there exists a deep-rooted jealousy, which at times breaks forth into open hostility.

The following morning (the 5th August), as I was about to start from Zanjan, I was overtaken by one of the "Gholaums," or couriers

* The discipline of the Persian army is sometimes attempted to be enforced by the severest punishments, some of which are enough to freeze the blood by their mere recital. I was informed by a Persian officer, himself an eye-witness, that, in order to check the desertion of his regiment, which, be it mentioned, was literally starving for want of rations, several of the soldiers were smeared with naphtha and burned alive.

of the embassy, on his way to Constantinople with despatches. Being impatient to reach Tabreez I ordered my people to follow me with all convenient speed; and, attended by a single servant, I pushed forward with the gholaum. The post-horses, bad enough at all times, were at this season in worse than ordinary condition, being allowed to run loose on the meadows until required for the use of the traveller; and it was nearly noon on the following day, when—after crossing the steep pass of the "Kafilan Koh," over which there is an old Turkish road—we entered upon the Plain of Miana, notorious for its fevers and its mosquitoes, but still more so for a species of bug, whose bite is so venomous as sometimes to produce death. Notwithstanding all these pleasing recollections, I threw myself upon the floor of the post-house, and in a few moments was fast asleep.

We did not halt longer than an hour; and the heat was most oppressive as we jogged slowly along the pebbly bed of the Miana

river, now shrunk into a narrow compass. Evening was closing in as we reached the small but pretty village of "Turcoman Chai," famous for the signature of the treaty in 1828, which put an end to the last war between Persia and Russia.

There now remained only seventy miles more to perform, and during the night we made as much play as the darkness would allow us. The hours preceding the break of day were positively cold, and I looked with impatience for the rising of the sun. But no sooner had my wish been fulfilled than I once more longed for the cool of night; for our road lay between high banks of chalk, which reflected the scorching rays of the sun with tenfold power, and excluded every breath of air. We galloped along merrily, however, for the stage was short, and our horses of the better sort, and shortly before noon we reached the gates of Tabreez.

CHAPTER VII.

Ruined Mosque—Citadel—Tabreez—British Palace—Mines of Karadagh—Return to Tabreez—Departure for the Frontier—Sofian—Morand—Quarantine Stations—Djulfa.

IMMEDIATELY before entering the city, to the left of the road, stand the ruins of a handsome mosque; the gateway, which is still perfect, is beautifully inlaid with porcelain of the brightest blue. This mosque was overthrown by an earthquake, a very common visitation in this "land of fire." So lately as the beginning of the summer a succession of shocks, which lasted several days, was felt in a neighbouring district; and the frightened peasants, abandoning their tottering houses, took refuge in tents.

The citadel of Tabreez, a high and massive building of well executed brick-work, is visible from afar, above the broad screen of gardens which mask the approach of the city.

Tabreez, the capital of the province of Azerbeijan, is now the most thriving town in Persia, being the great mart of both British and Russian merchandize: for the roads from Trebizonde and Georgia here unite. A few years ago it suffered severely from the ravages of plague and cholera, which raged in fearful rivalry within its devoted walls, and laid a portion of the city in ruins. It now contains sixty or seventy thousand inhabitants; but, both in population and in splendour, it has considerably fallen off since the death of the Prince Royal "Abbas Mirza," whose court almost rivalled in magnificence that of his father. The present governor is a brother of the Shah, but all the cares of government devolve upon the Ameer-i-Nizam, or commander of the regular troops.

The mountains which surround Tabreez are of the most fantastic forms and motley colours, all destitute of vegetation; and the plain, in which the city stands, is dry and stony. The gardens are cultivated with care,

and yield every species of fruit in the greatest abundance and perfection. The grapes of Casveen, and the melons of Isfahan, were the best fruit that I had hitherto tasted in Persia; but the nectarine of Tabreez, and the large white peach of Maragha, a neighbouring town, are unrivalled, both in size and flavour.

I took up my quarters under the hospitable roof of my kind friend Dr. Riach, who was living in one wing of the British Palace, a small but comfortable house, fitted up quite in the English style. From morning till night the steps were thronged with sick, who sought relief from European skill. Both here and in Tehran the good that is done by the medical gentlemen belonging to the Embassy is incalculable; and they deserve the greater credit, from the ingratitude and unreasonableness of their patients, who, especially those of highest rank, after experiencing all the benefits of their attention and skill, seem to forget their very existence, until a recurrence of disease drives them again to seek relief.

Having taken the precaution of sending forward one of my servants with my passports to the Russian frontier, I accompanied my friend Dr. Riach on a visit to the mines of Karadagh, or the Black Mountain, where a body of Scottish miners had recently commenced their operations. Our road led us across a hilly country, well cultivated, and enlivened by numerous villages.

It was on the morning of the second day that we reached Angird, a distance of about fifty miles from Tabreez; and, on entering a narrow valley, we saw with pleasure a row of English-looking cottages, built on the edge of a clear mountain-stream. A little lower stood the foundry, with its tall chimney, certainly not a picturesque object, yet pleasing to us, as evincing an industry foreign to the country.

On the following morning we visited the mines, under the guidance of Mr. Robertson, the superintendent,—a clever, intelligent Scotchman,—who informed us that in no other country had he ever seen such mineral

wealth. Within the compass of a few miles are found the richest veins of iron, tin, and copper ore, apparently inexhaustible. The iron mines alone were being worked, and preparations were making for casting guns of a large calibre, but the steam-engine had not yet been put together. The iron-ore contains upwards of ninety per cent. of metal; whereas, if I mistake not, sixty per cent. is considered a rich ore in England.

After remaining one day with Sir Henry Bethune, who was then on a visit to the mines, I returned to Tabreez on the 14th, and on the 16th I commenced my march for the Russian frontier. Before quitting Tabreez I reduced my travelling establishment as much as I could conveniently do. Having left my cook behind, and also dispensed with the luxury of a kalioun (without which no one thinks of travelling in Persia), my party now consisted only of my head servant and two grooms, who had already accompanied me on previous journeys to

Isfahan and to the shores of the Caspian, and on whom I felt that I could depend. They were all armed with sword and pistol, besides which they carried the long Persian rifle, universally worn by servants travelling: they were mounted on serviceable horses of the hardy Turcoman breed. For my own riding, I had brought from Tehran two favourite horses; one, a bright bay Turcoman, which had belonged to the Shah—the other, a young chestnut Arab from Susa. The colt having been taken amiss on his journey, I was forced to leave him in Tabreez, and replaced him by a little grey Arab, scarce fourteen hands high, but an admirable roadster. It was noon when we quitted Tabreez to cross the plain which stretches far to the north and west of the city, and the heat was intense. On reaching the village of Sofian, shortly after sunset, I ordered my carpet to be spread on the roof of a ruined palace, while my horses were picketed in the court below. The moon was nearly at the full, and as I sat

down to a late dinner, I needed no other light. The sky was of a deep cloudless blue, studded with countless stars, whose faint light was eclipsed by the splendour of the moon. Immediately fronting me stood the village mosque in bright relief against a clump of mingled poplar and chunar, and on either hand rose the tall avenues of the palace-garden, their silvery branches bending gracefully to the evening breeze.

On the 17th, finding that I could not possibly reach the Arras before night, I allowed the pretty village of Morand to tempt me to an early halt, and soon after midnight continued my journey. I breakfasted at the small village of Ghergher, in an orchard, adjoining the post-house; but was fairly driven from my post by the tongues of two scolding women to whom the orchard belonged, and who loaded me with every species of abuse, in which the Persian language is particularly rich. Two hours more brought me to the Arras, or Araxes, which, since the peace of

Turcoman Chai, has constituted the southern boundary of the Russian empire. It is at this spot a broad but shallow river, and, being low at this season, my horses were able to ford it a short distance above the quarantine station.

I halted for a few moments at the last village on the Persian frontier to make an arrangement with the Ked-Khoda, or Chief, to supply me with provisions during my detention. I then crossed the river in a clumsy flat-bottomed boat, worked by two men. While descending the slope which leads to the water's edge I looked in vain for the building of the quarantine establishment, the only house visible being a small square hut, the residence of the superintendent. On landing I found that the sole accommodation for travellers consisted in some half-dozen subterranean cells, low and dark, and swarming with cockroaches. I was ushered into one of these, which had been carpeted with red baize, and contained the luxuries of a

table and chair, though of the most primitive and least comfortable construction. To the ceiling was also suspended a piece of baize of the size of the table, probably to prevent the cockroaches from falling into my pillau. A strong wind, which generally draws through the gorge of the Arras, whirled the dust in eddies throughout every corner of my cave, while a burning sun forbade my taking refuge without doors. A sentry, pacing up and down in front of my prison, with shouldered firelock, wore his great coat, on the Irish principle (to which, by the way, I am quite a convert) of keeping out the heat. The superintendent, known to the natives by the name of Aga Schukin, soon came to visit me; and the ready manner in which he extended his hand to me, led me to hope that the quarantine regulations would not be very scrupulously adhered to. He was a jolly, good-humoured fellow, who spoke only Russian, so that our conversation had to pass through the medium of two interpreters. After holding out hopes

that my detention would not be tedious, he invited me to drink tea with him on the following afternoon, at the site of the once-flourishing Armenian city of Djulfa, lying a few miles higher up the Arras.

The day was propitious, and a northerly breeze cooled the atmosphere sufficiently to make the ride agreeable. We halted on the margin of a clear stream which once flowed through a populous city, but now winds among crumbling walls, or, choked by fallen buildings, spreads itself in lagoons amongst the ruins. An occasional snipe, rising from beneath our horses' feet, was the only living creature we saw. It was in 1603 that Shah Abbas the Great, with the double view of depopulating Armenia, and of introducing into his own country industrious and enterprising colonists, forced the inhabitants of Djulfa to migrate into Persia; and, as a poor compensation for obliging them to quit their house and home, settled them, with some commercial privileges, in the suburb of

Isfahan, since known by the name of Djulfa. The Russian bank of the Arras is barren and uninhabited; on the opposite side, a few villages line its tributary streams.

CHAPTER VIII.

Release from Quarantine — Nakhshivan — Mount Ararat — Kevrah — Russian Cossack Station — Night Marches — Armenian Harvest — Offerings of First Fruits — Christian Chapel — Erivan.

On the 20th I was agreeably surprised by receiving permission to depart, of which I did not lose a moment in availing myself, and within an hour I was on my road to Nakhshivan, the nearest frontier town. On reaching the summit of a range of hills at some miles from the river, the venerable peak of Ararat suddenly burst upon my view. I know not why, but I was quite unprepared for the sight; however, there was no mistaking that noble mountain towering above the intervening hills, and I hailed its appearance as that of an old friend.

On nearing the town I sent on one of my servants with my passport, and with a letter

from the Russian Consul at Tabreez, addressed to the Police-master, who hospitably received me into his house; but, as the worthy man spoke no other languages besides Polish and Russian, our intercourse was limited. In the afternoon I discovered another Pole, a gentlemanlike, intelligent man, who, together with six or seven of his brothers, had served under Napoleon, and had belonged to that regiment of Polish lancers which made such havoc among our lines at Albuera, and which was at that time commanded by one of his brothers. Having made up my mind to halt one day at Nakhshivan, I accepted his kind invitation to dine with him on the morrow, and was much entertained by his numerous well-told stories of his campaigns under Napoleon. He now holds the situation of head of the customs—no very troublesome office, as the foreign imports of Georgia are shackled with so many restrictions as almost to amount to a total prohibition.

On the 22nd I mounted my horse at four

in the morning, and arrived at the village of Kevrah, a distance of twenty miles, at a little before ten. There was not a single village near the road, owing to the absence of water. The cultivation of this district is almost entirely confined to the banks of the Arras, the course of which we could trace through the valley to our left. Its banks are level for some distance on either side, then, gradually rising in gentle undulations, they form a broken table-land, reaching to the base of the distant mountains, which, both in outline and colouring, reminded me of the lovely hills of Malaga. Ararat, with its two distant peaks, bore about N.N.W. The lesser Ararat was bare of snow, but the principal crest of the mountain was of dazzling white, relieved by dark chasms in the rock, and by precipices from whose steep flanks the snow had slid into the hollows beneath. A few light clouds hung motionless above the summit, throwing their gray shadows upon the spotless snow. It is a subject of dispute

whether the highest peak of Ararat has ever been reached; for, although Professor Parrot published a detailed account of his ascent, his statements have not met with general belief. The Armenian Patriarch of the neighbouring convent of Etchmiadzin refutes the Professor's assertion with the same pious indignanation with which the Pope rejected the system of Galileo, for the Armenian Church devoutly believes that no mortal foot can profane the summit of the holy mountain.

As far as I could judge, at the distance which I passed from Ararat, the ascent did not seem by any means impracticable. In many places the snow appeared to me to slope gently and unbroken up to the very summit. The lawless predatory habits of the Koords of this district would render the attempt dangerous without a sufficient escort. I was myself once very nearly being carried off by these Koords, while sketching the mountain from the high land beyond the city of Bayazeed. I had cantered on in advance of my party, in

order to have more time to finish my sketch, and had sent back the only servant who was with me to fetch my colours, which I had left with the baggage. I had no arms except my sword, and a pair of pistols in the holsters of my saddle. My horse was grazing by my side. I was so intent upon my occupation, that I did not perceive the risk that I had run, but an "elchee," or envoy, from the very distant country of Kokan, on the frontiers of China, who had been my travelling companion for some days, informed me that, at the moment when he and his party hove in sight, three Koords had approached within a hundred yards of me, under cover of a deep ravine. As soon as they perceived that I was likely to be supported they turned their horses' heads, and were quickly out of sight.

On reaching Kevrah I found a Russian post-house newly erected, which contained two whitewashed rooms for the accommodation of travellers. The only furniture was a broad wooden bench,—which might serve,

on a pinch, for a bed,—and a rickety deal table. The Russian post is carried on throughout this country by Cossacks, pickets of whom are stationed along each main road, at intervals of from twenty to five-and-twenty miles. These men are generally civil, but it is difficult to procure from them any provisions beyond the large loaves of coarse brown bread which they themselves bake. Other luxuries might perhaps be found, but such as are not quite suited to an English palate. According to the custom of the East, I had all the necessaries, and some of the comforts, of life with me, which made me independent of what I should find on the road. The Russian bread, coarse as it was, was a treat to me after the flat cakes universally eaten in Persia. At night, I ordered my carpets to be spread in the court-yard, near my horses, for the habit of sleeping in the open air made the room appear quite oppressive to me.

August 23rd.—Soon after midnight we mounted, by the light of a brilliant moon.

The cold was piercing during the first few hours, and I was glad to dismount and run by the side of my horse to warm myself. A keen wind blew right in our faces; but, soon after the morning star had risen, the wind went down, and the atmosphere, though cold, was pleasant. Much as I have travelled in the East, I have not quite reconciled myself to these night-marches, although I feel that they are necessary. During the day the heat is so overpowering that I cannot sleep, and it is vastly disagreeable to be roused at midnight from your first refreshing slumber to pursue your journey. After travelling for some hours at a tedious foot-pace, the feeling of sleepiness becomes quite painful, and the most even temper is scarcely proof against the childish ill-humour which this feeling causes. I at last adopted a plan, which I would recommend to any traveller in these countries: whenever I felt exceedingly sleepy I dismounted, and, ordering tea, the apparatus for which my servant always carried with him, I threw myself down

by the road-side, and was generally asleep in a minute. In half an hour the tea was made; my servant waked me, and I continued my ride as much refreshed as if I had slept for hours.

The roads had all undergone repair, and small wooden bridges had been thrown over the numerous streams which crossed our path on their course to the Arras. It was expected that the Emperor, after visiting Georgia, would examine with his own eye the southern frontier of his empire; and the road from Erivan to the river, which had hitherto been impassable for carriages, was now a broad and level causeway.

In the evening I sauntered for half an hour beyond the precincts of the village, along the banks of a clear mountain-stream. The sun had only just sunk below the horizon, and Ararat stood forth in dark relief against the glowing sky. The mountain was of the deepest purple; even the snow-clad peak was not distinguishable from the general mass. I have

seen loftier mountains than Ararat, but its massive outline, the bold manner in which it rises from the immense plain of the Arras, and the powerful interest with which sacred history has invested it, unite in rendering it an object of wonder and of awe. It now forms the boundary of the three empires of Turkey, Persia, and Russia.

August 24th.—Our road led to-day through a fertile and well-watered district, abounding in corn-fields and rice and cotton plantations. It was the first time that I had seen rice so nearly ripe, and for some time I mistook it for barley, which it resembles in all but height. Both rice and cotton require constant irrigation; and beneath this hot sun the miasma which arises from these plantations is extremely unhealthy. At this season the villages of Armenia offer a picture of great abundance, large heaps of wheat and barley being collected round them for the purpose of being trodden out by oxen,—the Eastern substitute for the flail. To-day I marked a decided

improvement in the cultivation of the soil; and, instead of the slow process (general throughout Persia) of housing the corn by donkey-loads, waggons of primitive construction, drawn by buffaloes and oxen, and piled up to an enormous height, were groaning beneath the rich produce of the harvest. The work went on by night as well as day; for the moon, still nearly full, gave a light scarce less brilliant than the noonday-sun. The harvest is indeed a cheerful scene in every country where nature bountifully repays the toil of man; but here, with such a sky, it is doubly gay.

As I rode along the plain where the reapers were at work on either side of me, many of them brought sheaves of corn to the road-side, and laid them down before my horse's feet. It is an ancient custom, and one that I reverence: it is, at least, a graceful way of begging.

It was a beautiful sight to watch, this morning, the first gleams of sunshine on the peak of

Ararat and its gradual descent, until the whole mountain was in a glow, and the plain alone lay in shade. Then, as the sun rose from behind the low range of hills which I was skirting, and lit up the plain, numerous villages, till then unseen, glittered in the morning rays and gave life to the landscape. Between me and the mountain not a hillock intervened to detract from its apparent height: there it stood, in the centre of the plain, quite isolated, with a few straggling villages scattered along its base, and the river winding like a silver thread at its foot.

At sunset a small peal of bells from an adjoining chapel struck up their evening chime. It was a sound I had not heard for many a day, and reminded me that I was again in a Christian country.

August 25th.—A three hours' ride brought me to Erivan, the capital of the Russian province of Armenia,—the latest acquisition of that power from Persia. I had expected to find the castle almost impregnable, from the

honours which were heaped upon the Marshal Paskevitch for its capture, and was quite surprised to find a mere Turkish fort, strong indeed by nature on one side, but on the other three defended merely by a mud-wall, and commanded from all the adjoining hills. The town and the fort are quite distinct, and stand on detached mounds, at the base of which runs the Zengui river. The town is falling into decay, and its population has decreased since it has been in the hands of Russia. I went to the only bath which the town now contains, and which is common to Armenians and Mahommedans. In Persia, Christians are not permitted to enter the bath of the Mussulman; but the followers of the Prophet are quickly taught toleration under the sway of Russia. I afterwards visited the fort, the interior of which is a mere heap of ruins. No repairs have been made, as it is intended to erect a new fortification somewhere in the neighbourhood, the present site being unhealthy. The garrison is very small,

merely a couple of hundred men. In the castle stands the shell of the last Persian governor's palace, looking down upon the deep rocky bed of the river, which is rapid and not fordable at any season. A stone bridge, of a single arch, is thrown across it, just below the fort. Erivan is famous for its fruit, especially for its melons, which are really delicious, and are sent to great distances. The Governor of the province, Prince Bebutoff, was not in Erivan while I remained there.

CHAPTER IX.

Russian Post-waggon—Armenian Convent of Etchmiadzin—Monkish Legends—Festival of the Virgin—Blessing the First-Fruits of the Vineyards—St. Gregory Loosavorich—Synod—Armenian Archbishop—Return to Erivan.

August 26th. After breakfast I ordered one of the Russian post-waggons, to convey myself and servant to the convent of Etchmiadzin, the seat of the Catholicos, or Patriarch of the Armenian Church. I quickly repented not having performed the journey on horseback, for the waggon was without springs, and the roads so rough, that, as my driver mercilessly urged his horses at full gallop over ruts and stones, it required all my exertions to prevent myself from being shaken out. My servant implored me to allow him to ride or to walk; anyhow, provided he might get out of the waggon. At length we reached the convent, powdered with dust from head to foot, while our three shaggy

horses, dripping with sweat, were literally plastered with mud. We drove into the outer court of the convent, but, all the monks being at prayers, I ordered my servant to wait till they were over, while I myself strolled into the large inner court, in the centre of which stands the cathedral. The service was just breaking up, and the monks were slowly returning to their cloisters. Apartments were assigned me in the court allotted to the accommodation of strangers; and an old man, who for many years had presided over the Armenian Church of Djulfa, near Isfahan, was appointed my mehmandar, on account of his understanding Persian.

Etchmiadzin consists of several distinct churches, each surrounded by a high wall, flanked by circular towers. The churches themselves are of a rude and inelegant architecture, forming the shape of a cross surmounted by a species of cupola peculiar to the churches of Armenia, which rises from the centre of the roof in a cylindrical form,

and is crowned by a low spire. The buildings are all of solid masonry, and the stone of which they are constructed is a deep red sandstone. Fronting the principal gate of the cathedral stand the apartments of the Catholicos and the Archbishops, which open on the other side upon spacious gardens; the cells of the monks occupy one side of the cathedral square, and the long refectory, a narrow vaulted chamber, with table and benches made of the most massive blocks of stone, forms the basement story of the opposite side. Soon after sunset dinner was served in my quarters, and my old cicerone the Archbishop, attended by one of the brethren, favoured me with his company. The fare was tolerable, but not to be compared to that which the traveller finds in most Italian convents; the wine was that of Georgia, and would have been very palatable but for a strong taste of naphtha, with which the skins in which the wine of that country is kept are rendered impervious. After dinner, the old man having satisfied his

curiosity, as far as I was willing to gratify him, regarding my birth, parentage, and occupation, I turned the conversation to the subject of the churches, and was much edified by his authentic account of their origin. The cathedral he assured me was built on the very spot where our Saviour alighted upon earth when he descended from Heaven, in order to destroy the fire-worshippers, and that St. Gregory Loosavorich, or the Illuminator, their patron saint, had erected it in honour of that event. Numerous were the legends which the old man related to me concerning St. Gregory, till at last I felt so sleepy that I bowed my friend out with the utmost civility.

August 27th.—Sunday happened to be the festival of the Virgin Mary, one of the principal holydays in the Armenian calendar, so that I had an excellent opportunity of seeing the ceremonies of that church. I had scarcely time to swallow a hasty breakfast when I received a summons to proceed to the cathedral, where the service had already commenced.

The Catholicos, an old man of notoriously bad character, was not present, the heat having driven him to a village among the mountains; the senior Archbishop officiated in his place, and so much mummery I do not remember ever having seen. In many respects the service resembled that of the Roman church; the responses were all chaunted with an accompaniment of small bells, and censers of frankincense were burning before the altar. The monks stood in two lines reaching from the door to the chancel, and I must confess that I mistook them for old women with their hoods and cloaks, until their long grizzly beards undeceived me. After the mass was finished large trays of bread and grapes were brought in, and, after being blessed, were handed round to the congregation. I was told that these were the first-fruits of the vineyards, and that, until they had been hallowed by this ceremony, no grapes were touched in Armenia. It did not appear to me that this custom had any connexion with the sacrament of the

Lord's Supper. Throughout the service I was particularly struck by the want of attention, and even of decorum, manifested not only by the congregation but by the monks themselves, who conversed together in low whispers. The church was considerably crowded with men, women, and children, who kept up an incessant chattering. There was none of that apparently sincere, though perhaps blind devotion, which I have so often remarked in Roman Catholic chapels; but indeed, when we consider the disadvantages under which the Armenian church has laboured, surrounded almost by bigoted Mahomedans, the wonder is, not that they should be so lukewarm, but that they should have retained even the name of Christians. In honour of the day numerous relics were displayed; I need scarcely remark, considering the site of Etchmiadzin, that a fragment of the ark was among them. The interior of the church is ornamented with paintings which completely cover the walls. Among them I noticed a representa-

tion of the ark grounding on Mount Ararat, but the larger portion pictured the miracles and sufferings of St. Gregory Loosavorich. Among the former he figures in the act of transforming one of the ancient monarchs of Armenia into the likeness of a pig: of the latter, the most curious is his emerging perfectly dry from the bottom of a river into which he had been thrown some fourteen years before. My guide pointed out to me a picture presented, and, as he assured me, painted, by Sir Robert Ker Porter. Two curiously carved pulpits, which occupy either side of the choir, were the gift, the one of a Christian Pope, the other of a Mahomedan conqueror. Near the door of the cathedral, without the building, stands a neat and simple monument of white marble, lately erected to the memory of Sir John Macdonald, the English minister in Persia, who died some years ago at Tabreez.

After mass was over, I called upon the superior of the convent, whom I found a sen-

sible, intelligent man. I next visited a wing which has been lately added, and which contains the hall of the newly-established Synod, a long room hung round with portraits of the old Armenian monarchs, a grim-looking race, with long beards and still longer names. The Catholicos nominally presides over the synod, but a moderator has been appointed by the Russian government, without whose approval nothing can be done, which makes the Emperor virtually the head of the Armenian church throughout the world, a power which works not the less effectively from its agency being unseen. This moderator is himself an Armenian, but quite "Russianized," a word which I do not scruple to use, since in their own language they have one of precisely similar meaning.

My old cicerone, who repeatedly informed me that he was an "archbishop" (almost the only word of English that he understood), insisted upon my seeing his apartment before I went away. it told more plainly than words

could do, the poverty of the Armenian church, and was perhaps the most curious object I saw at Etchmiadzin. It consisted of a single chamber, long, low, and vaulted. A small window above the door admitted a faint and doubtful light, by which, after I had been seated for some time, I made out a portrait of St. Gregory suspended between two gaudily coloured prints of the Emperor and Empress. The old man appeared quite proud of his picture-gallery. From under the bed he produced a water-melon and a demijohn of sour wine, after partaking of which, I got into my waggon, and returned to Erivan.

CHAPTER X.

Rendamal—Prince Bebutoff—Zengui River—Russian Dinner—Lake of Goukcha—Chiboukloo—Pass of Dilijan—Colonel Espejo.

It was evening when I arrived at the post-house, and, tired with my uneasy drive, I quickly sought my pillow. But my slumbers were soon interrupted by a pelting shower, which obliged me to take refuge under the shelter of the roof. However, I could not sleep, and the shower having blown over, I returned to my bivouac.

August 28th.—At my usual early hour I was in my saddle, and after a three hours' ride reached a solitary post-house, where I changed my baggage-cattle. Near this spot I passed the encampment of a battalion of infantry, which at this time was employed in making the road leading from Erivan to Tiflis: a little farther I passed another regiment similarly

employed. The men were dressed in smock frocks and forage caps, and struck me as active, soldierlike fellows. To the right of the road the site of the projected fortress, which is to replace the castle of Erivan, was pointed out to me. For the last four hours I was exposed to a pitiless storm, which was quite a novelty to man and beast, and so unlooked for, that our cloaks and my mackintosh were carefully stowed away at the very bottom of the deep Tatar travelling-bags. The sun was just beginning to break through the heavy canopy of clouds when we reached the small Armenian village of Rendamal, which lies on the bank of the Zengui river, from which the villagers brought me a very fine trout for dinner. My wetting was nearly causing a return of my old enemy the ague, but by rolling myself up in my large fur cloak, I escaped the threatened attack.

August 29th.—In the morning I made the disagreeable discovery that the post-houses were not yet established on this new line of

road, and that I could procure no baggage-cattle. I was recommended to await patiently the arrival of Prince Bebutoff, the governor of the province, who was expected at noon at his country-house in the neighbouring hills; and patiently I did wait, for the day was beautiful, and the wooded banks of the stream tempted me forth for a stroll. I could see the trout rising merrily; and I sat down under the shade of an alder which overhung a deep pool such as the larger fish delight in, and thought of the happy hours I had spent with my rod and line in the backwoods of America. A little lower, where the stream overflowed its banks and formed a sedgy swamp, a herd of buffaloes were wallowing in the mire, their heads alone visible above the sedges. I was almost asleep when the sound of wheels startled me, and looking up I saw on the opposite bank a light britschka winding up the hill which led to the prince's villa. I walked quickly homewards, but before I reached the village I met my groom in search of me with

a led horse: I mounted and arrived at the Prince's almost as soon as he did. The situation of his house is pretty; it stands upon a green knoll at the extremity of a long and narrow valley, through which flows a clear and noisy mountain stream, a tributary of the Zengui. Behind the house the hills are partially wooded with dwarf oak; and the ivy-mantled ruins of an Armenian church and convent look down upon a rocky and precipitous ravine. The house is built of logs united with cement, and the projecting roof forms a rustic veranda running the whole length of the front.

The Prince received me with much courtesy, and immediately gave orders that I should be furnished with horses, but requested that I would first partake his country fare, the dinner being that moment announced. The governor is by birth an Armenian, but has served for many years in the Russian army, which he accompanied to France, and in which he holds the rank of Major-General.

His manner is polished, and he speaks French with tolerable fluency. During dinner he called for a bottle of champagne, and pledged me a bumper to the health of "Le Prince Wellington," of whom he professed himself an ardent admirer. When our party broke up it was still quite early, for our dinner hour was twelve: so I presented my order for horses, and, procuring them without delay, started at four for the village of Chiboukloo.

At about seven I reached the summit of a high range of hills, when a beautiful and unexpected scene greeted my sight. Under my feet lay the lake of Goukcha or Sevan, terminating to the westward in a semicircular bay, on the shores of which the little village I was bound to was faintly visible, but stretching to the eastward, as far as the eye could reach, its dark mirror-like surface unbroken, save by one rocky islet, crowned by an Armenian convent. The possession of a worthless tract of land which borders on this lake was the

ostensible cause of the late war between Persia and Russia. Giving my horse to a groom, I descended the steep and rugged path which led to the water's edge, but before I reached the bottom night had set in. I had left my people far behind, and, tempted by the cheerful light of a blazing watch-fire, I joined a party of muleteers seated in a circle on their bales of tobacco, while their cattle grazed upon the hillside. Coming alone and unknown among these wild-looking mountaineers, I was surprised at the courtesy of their reception: they arranged a comfortable seat for me on the side where the smoke would least annoy me, and opened a bale of tobacco in order to give me a better pipe than they themselves were smoking. We entered into conversation until my people came up, when I mounted and made the best of my way to the village. I found some difficulty in procuring a night's lodging at this late hour, but having at length roused the head man of the village, he soon cleared a stable for us. When

I saw the troop of dirty ragged creatures who unwillingly resigned their berths for our accommodation, I did not much relish my night's quarter, but a traveller in the East must not be over nice.

August 30th.—I was tired with my long walk, for in Persia we rarely went forth on foot, and day was beginning to dawn when I woke from my sound sleep. The village was like a beehive on a summer's morning, pouring forth all its inmates; herds of buffaloes and oxen were driven forth to labour, while large flocks of sheep and goats, glad to escape from their crowded pens, scrambled up the mountain-side in search of pasture.

Soon after quitting Chiboukloo the hills began to exchange their lawn-like verdure for groves of oak and other trees, and less than two hours brought us to the entrance of the Pass of Dilijan; down which an excellent road, in many places excavated from the solid rock, wound through beautiful woods of oak and beech, mingled with the graceful moun-

tain-ash, the first I had seen since leaving England. At the summit of the pass a little spring by the road-side is almost lost in the high grass: but every ravine pours forth its tributary waters; and when the stream emerges from the wood it is already an angry torrent, sweeping trees and stones before it. The road presented a very busy scene. In many spots where bridges were building, or considerable excavations carrying on, the soldiers had erected low log-huts, with roofs of twisted boughs, and cultivated small plots of garden round them. The sight of these log-huts, and the fall of the heavy axe, reminded me of the new settlements, or clearings, in America. I passed one deserted hut, a mile at least from any habitation; and on the threshold I saw a half-starved cat, whom even famine would not tempt to desert her home. The Russian troops are turned to great account in this new country, where they not only make the roads but build the bridges: every regiment contains a large number of carpenters, masons,

blacksmiths, and other artificers: so that the soldiers are employed mostly in works of this kind, while the mere digging is performed by the compulsory labour of the natives.

After passing the village from which the defile receives its name, our road led through an undulating country of alternate wood and pasture, not unlike the park scenery of England. In one of the prettiest spots, where the wide-spreading branches of a noble oak threw their broad shade upon a sloping bank, I ordered our noonday halt. The horses were picketed on the margin of the stream, while I indulged in one of those pleasant hours of indolence, so sweet when earned by previous toil.

After a long day of more than fifty versts, about five-and-thirty miles, we stopped at an Armenian village called Caravan Serai. The houses, like those of almost every village in this country, were subterranean, resembling the burrow of some four-footed animal, rather than the habitation of man. Some tents were

standing by the road-side untenanted, so I took possession of two. Scarcely was I lodged when a dapper little man with a curtailed coat, which turned out to be uniform though I mistook it for livery, came up to me, and, in bad French, requested that I would give Colonel Espejo the pleasure of my company that evening. I accepted the invitation gladly, and the messenger retired, unconscious, I hope, of my mistake. In a few minutes the colonel himself called upon me, accompanied by another officer of the same rank, an Italian or Spaniard, who had Russianized both himself and his name, without any evident improvement to either. Colonel Espejo is an Andalusian, a gentleman-like, handsome man, but a ten years' residence in Georgia has undermined a constitution naturally delicate, and aged him before his time. He is a remarkably agreeable intelligent man, and I spent a very pleasant evening in the society of him and his companion. He has been employed during five years in the con-

struction of the road along which I travelled to-day, and which does him great credit. Our conversation turned principally upon the campaigns of Persia and Turkey, in both of which my companions had borne a share. They expressed a higher opinion of the courage of the Turk than of that of the Persian; and added, that, while among the former no spy could be procured, the highest of the Persian nobles would sell the interests of his country. Colonel Espejo's house was, like the remainder of the village, subterranean, but neatly wainscoted with deal plank. In a country exposed to the extremes of heat and cold, these cellars preserve almost an uniform temperature, which is the principal cause of their being adopted. Colonel Espejo promised to procure horses for me for the first stage, and gave me a letter of introduction to a Colonel Berens, the Governor of the district, who, he doubted not, would be able to find me cattle to carry my baggage as far as Tiflis. Being obliged to visit a bridge which had

recently been carried away by the torrent, and which lay on my road, he proposed that we should ride together thus far, which I gladly agreed to.

CHAPTER XI.

Bibis—Colonel Berens—Russian Magistrates—Kour or Cyrus—Soghanloo—Tiflis—Baron Rosen—Best Hotel—Countess Simonich—Monsieur Rodofinikin.

August 31st. At half after four the two colonels called for me at my tent, and we had a pleasant ride of about ten miles together. At the spot where we separated, the stream, swollen by the late storms, had deserted its former bed, and forcing a passage through a low alluvial soil, had taken the bridge in flank, and undermined the buttresses of solid masonry. Leaving the colonel to consider how he could best contrive to render the bridge passable for the Emperor, I rode on to the village of Bibis, the residence of Colonel Berens, where I arrived a little after eight. The colonel, a large and powerful man, with the air and mien of a rough good-humoured soldier, received me with great kindness; but he spoke only Russian, a language of which I did not then understand a word. He had

indeed picked up a few words of German and French in the campaign of 1814, but they had evidently been learnt in the canteen and in the tavern, not in the saloons of Paris. Breakfast is a meal unknown in Russia, but I procured a cup of tea; and as the dinner hour was between eleven and twelve, it was not long to wait. The colonel's quarters were comfortable enough, (at least for a Russian soldier's notions of comfort), and their situation not unpicturesque.

These governors of districts are magistrates; and, being vested with somewhat more extended powers than those in our own country, they dispense with such trifles as petty sessions and quarter sessions, and decide the causes brought before them by the natives somewhat summarily.* My host was occupied

* It is very rare indeed to find a Russian conversant with any Eastern language, however long he may have resided among Easterns; and on this account they, or, I should rather say, the poor fellows who apply to them for justice, are completely at the mercy of their interpreters.

during the whole morning by his justice business; but a little before noon dinner was announced,—a substantial meal, not very well suited, I confess, to my palate. Soon after we had risen from the table half-a-dozen of the inhabitants of a neighbouring village arrived with baggage-horses, at least twice as many as I required; and I agreed with two of them to accompany me as far as Tiflis. It was nearly four when we resumed our journey, and at eight we reached the village of Astambegli, where we halted for the night. We had left the woods behind us when we crossed the river, but the country through which we now passed was undulating and carefully cultivated. About an hour before the end of our stage we came within sight of the broad valley of the Kour, or Cyrus, the river on which Tiflis stands. Its course was hidden from us by the low woods which spread on either bank to some distance from the water's edge. At Astambegli, also, we found some tenantless tents, which saved

us the trouble of seeking quarters in the village.

September 1st.—I might have reached Tiflis this day without any difficulty, but I preferred arriving in the morning, and my costume required a little Europeanizing before entering the capital of Georgia. I commenced my march at five, and at half after eight I halted near a small stream for breakfast. Soon after remounting, the heat became so distressing to my horses, who, even at a foot-pace, were bathed in sweat, that I ordered a second halt under the trees which line the right bank of the Kour. We fortunately waylaid a peasant carrying to the market a donkey-load of water-melons, and were glad to ease the poor animal of a part of his burthen. The village of Soghanloo, where I halted for the night, is only five miles distant from Tiflis, and stands on a bend of the river, opposite to an experimental farm, which has been lately established under the superintendence of a German. There were, however, no means of crossing

the river, which, though narrow, is deep and rapid.

September 2nd. — Immediately on quitting Soghanloo, a sudden bend of the road brought us within sight of the enormous military hospital of Tiflis, situated on the left bank of the river, a mile outside the town; and we soon entered the suburbs, passing through extensive vineyards, stretching to the high banks of the river. Hundreds of water-wheels, turned by the current of the Kour, raise the water in buckets to the level of these vineyards, through which it is carried in pipes. At the entrance of the town I was stopped by a barrier, which, on my presenting my passport, was immediately raised, and I descended a steep hill into the lower or native quarter of the town. This portion of Tiflis is completely Asiatic, both in architecture and costume, containing long rows of bazaars, thronged with Georgians and Armenians in their native dresses. On ascending the opposite hill the houses are better constructed and the streets

wider; and the Russian quarter, which contains the governor's palace and the public offices, is laid out in spacious squares, and evinces a taste for showy architecture, with which the buildings of their modern capital have probably inspired them. At this moment the effect was more than usually striking, for every house had been fresh painted; and, in anticipation of the Emperor's arrival, large buildings had been hastily run up to complete unfinished squares. Scaffolding was still seen round all the belfries and the house in which a grand ball was to be given to the Emperor was not yet roofed in. In spite of much which showed bad taste, I was particularly struck with the first view of Tiflis, and its picturesque situation. The broad and rapid Kour here winds through a narrow pass hemmed closely in by the hills on its right bank, and dividing the city from its suburbs. The houses rise in tiers from the water's edge, interspersed with terraces of gardens and large open squares, while on a spur of the

overhanging mountain stand the dark ruins of an ancient castle erected by the Turks during their temporary reign in Georgia. On the left bank stands the modern citadel, based on the perpendicular rock washed by the current; and higher up the stream lies the German colony of New Tiflis. The country all around is dry and barren, and the situation of Tiflis exposes it to excessive heat during the summer and autumn. Every spring that has been found in the town is mineral, and the water of the Kour is alone used by the inhabitants.

I rode through the whole length of the town before I reached the palace of the governor. In the Russian quarter nine-tenths of those I met wore uniform, buttoned closely up to the chin, no very enviable dress in such a climate. Even the unfortunate clerk, who is nailed to his desk from morning till night, must comply with this vexatious custom. The numberless crosses and medals appenden to almost every button-hole showed with what

a lavish hand these decorations are bestowed in the Russian service.

I rode at once to the palace, and on announcing my name was ushered into a handsome suite of apartments, in one of which sat the Baron Rosen,—an old German soldier, no enemy (unless report and his appearance both belie him) to good cheer. I cannot say much for the reception he gave me, the coolness of which I was at that moment somewhat at a loss to account for. I discovered, however, afterwards that the Emperor having expressed a wish that no foreigners should be in Georgia during his visit, my presence was most unwelcome to the Baron, who, on hearing from Persia that I was on my way to Tiflis, had written to prevent my passing the frontier; but I had already completed my quarantine, and, being once within the Russian territory, with passport duly signed, he could not take it upon himself to order me out of the country.

I mentioned to the Baron that I was

desirous of visiting the provinces of Mingrelia and Imeretia, and begged that he would allow some trustworthy Cossack to accompany me; but the proposition was evidently unpalatable to him, and he evaded giving me an answer. I soon made my bow, and, attended by an orderly of the governor's, I went to the best hotel which Tiflis afforded,—a miserable tavern kept by a Jew. My apartment, for which I paid an extravagant price, consisted of a large dirty room, with scarcely an article of furniture, for myself, and two small closets for my servants. The stabling was still worse.

I called for a droshky, a low four-wheeled vehicle in use throughout Russia, and drove to the house of the Countess Simonich, the wife of the Russian ambassador at Tehran, to whom I had brought letters. The Countess is a very ladylike woman, with great remains of beauty, though mother of a large family. She is a Georgian by birth, and speaks, besides her native language, no other but

Russian. Her eldest daughter, "La Comtesse Marie," a lovely girl of about fourteen, served as our interpreter. Several other children, of different ages, (all with the beautiful dark eyes of their mother,) were playing in the long corridor. The Countess spent some years in Persia with her husband, but had quitted the country before my arrival.

I next called upon Monsieur Rodofinikin, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had evidently received his instructions from the Baron regarding my wish to visit the shores of the Black Sea. On my broaching the subject, he expressed his regret that it was quite impossible at that time, since the Baron had received accounts of the breaking out of the plague in those countries, and that a "cordon sanitaire" had been established on this side of Koutais. This was evidently a mere pretence; but, as I well knew that if I persisted they would find some means of detaining me, I told Monsieur Rodofinikin that I would cross

the Caucasus, and remain at the warm baths of Petigorsky until the arrival of the Emperor. In this scheme I was promised every assistance.

CHAPTER XII.

Sunday Parade—German Church—Colony of New Tiflis—Governor-General's Levee — Georgian Women — Russian Carriages—Peter Ney—Warm Baths—French Consul—Origin of the German Colonies.

September 3rd.—THERE being a grand parade on every Sunday morning, I received an invitation from the governor-general to witness it, especially as this was the anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. I declined, however, for I was desirous of attending service in the church of the German colony of New Tiflis, on the opposite side of the Kour. Although the church was almost opposite my inn, I was obliged to ride a long way through the town to the foot of the castle, where the only bridge stands, and then through the Georgian suburbs to the colony. The bridge is of a single arch, erected upon the ruined foundations of a very ancient one.

The river at this point is exceedingly rapid, and full of whirlpools. Beyond the bridge I was delayed for some time by meeting a regiment of infantry on its way to the parade. I was surprised at the cleanliness and soldier-like appearance of the men, whose dark uniform and black accoutrements reminded me of my old corps. After passing the bridge you enter a dirty street overrun with pigs, of which my horses, like good Mahomedans, had an invincible abhorrence, jumping from one side of the street to the other to avoid them. This quarter is peopled principally by Germans, and there is an inn to which I had been recommended, kept by a German also; but, judging from the exterior, it does not seem to possess the national virtue of cleanliness. The remainder of the road to the colony winds among the subterranean habitations of the Georgians, swarming with children, while the women, handsome but slatternly, sit in groups around their doors.

The colony presents a striking contrast to

this scene. A broad level road passes between two rows of neatly white-washed cottages, with their small gardens round them, and the inhabitants, in their holiday garb, were pouring forth to chapel. The women, with their sandy hair and freckled faces, their prim caps and short waisted gowns, could not indeed contest the palm of beauty with their dark-eyed and voluptuous neighbours; but their neat and homely appearance was quite refreshing to an eye accustomed to the slovenly garb of Eastern women.

I learned that the worthy rector of New Tiflis, Mr. Dittrich, had not yet returned from the baths, which his delicate health had obliged him to visit; and as it was doubtful whether service would be performed this morning, I cantered on to the small colony of Alexander's Dorf, a few miles higher up the river. At the very extremity of the village, in a small chapel of the rudest construction, the service had already commenced. The pastor, a homely but well-educated man, was expound-

ing, with clearness and energy, a portion of the scripture. The singing particularly pleased me: there was a simple harmony in it unfortunately rare in our churches. The whole congregation joined in the psalm apparently with heart and voice.

On my return to Tiflis etiquette required that I should make my bow to the governor-general on this their festival. The royal salute from the castle reminded me of this duty, and I rode on to the palace, where a large concourse of officers had assembled to attend the Baron's levee. On the governor's right hand was seated the primate of the Greek Church, the spiritual head of both the Russians and Georgians. I was not a little surprised to see several decorations suspended to his dress, while the broad ribbon of St. Stanislas was plainly seen beneath the folds of his mantle. On the other side of the governor sat the Baron Hahn, a Courlander, the head of a commission lately sent into Georgia to inquire into

all abuses. I sat next to the Baron, and found him a gentleman-like, intelligent man, well versed in European languages and literature. The levee was formal enough, and I soon made my exit, and drove to visit the Countess. According to the custom of her countrywomen, she was whiling away the afternoon by a rubber at whist. The indolence and want of all resource of Georgian women is proverbial: I am told that they rarely open a book, and they abandon the whole care of the household to their servants.

On a Sunday afternoon the balconies of Tiflis present an animated scene. The fair Georgians, partially concealed by their long white mantillas, assemble there in groups, to see and to be seen. At that distance they look pretty and fascinating.

September 4th.—Early this morning Monsieur Rodofinikin called upon me with a "feuille de route" for the warm baths, and recommended me to the German colony as the most likely place to find a carriage. At first

I turned away with disdain from the crazy, antiquated vehicles that were shown to me; but seeing that there was no possibility of finding a carriage to suit my English notion of neatness, I was fain to recommence my search, and decided upon a long lumbering britschka without springs, warranted to stand the roads of the Caucasus. As any of my own servants would have been worse than useless on such an expedition, I resolved to leave them with my horses at the German colony, and to hire a colonist who understood Russian. Dr. Riach had mentioned to me the name of a man likely to suit me, and I soon found him out. Peter Ney is a wonderful linguist for a man in his class of life, and is a versatile genius besides, following alternately the trades of carpenter, shoemaker, brewer, schoolmaster, and gentleman's valet: yet, with all these talents, Peter is always as poor as Job, and was delighted at the idea of accompanying me.

September 5th.—Immediately on getting up this morning I went to the warm baths, from

which Tiflis takes its name. There are two large establishments, both situated in the Asiatic quarter of the town. I was shown into a room in which were three reservoirs of different temperature. The one, which is of the natural heat of the water as it issues from the rock, was quite unbearable; I could not even keep my hand in it. The water is clear, but strongly impregnated with sulphur.

I dined with the Count de la Rati-Menton, the French Consul, who is living at the "pension" of an old soldier of Napoleon, who having taken unto himself a German wife, has settled in the colony. Old Paul is a privileged man, and takes his share in the conversation as he waits upon his guests. His made-dishes are dignified with French names, but, alas, they savour more of the barrack than of the Palais Royal. I met at the Count's a French gentleman of the name of Tessert, who has the superintendence of a newly-erected silk-manufactory.

September 6th.—I had intended starting this afternoon, but no post-horses were to be had; and, after being put off from hour to hour, I was told that I must wait until the morning. I took the precaution of hiring a vacant apartment in Paul's house, lest I might have some difficulty in finding a quarter during the Emperor's stay; and I placed my servants and horses under the care of the French consul. I found that the change from barley and chopped straw to oats and hay had brought my horses into bad condition, so I made arrangements for procuring their accustomed food. As I passed the house where my friend Dr. Riach had resided for some months, I stopped to have a chat with his landlord and landlady, of whose kindness he had made mention. The worthy couple were quite delighted to hear of their lodger, who. they agreed, was a "ganz lieber mann," and had but one fault, — that of not speaking German.

The origin of these colonies is curious.

Some twenty or thirty years ago a belief arose in the kingdom of Wirtemburg that the millennium was at hand; and, partly to escape the vexations they were submitted to on account of this belief, partly to be nearer the fancied scene of our Lord's coming, many families emigrated to the South of Russia. Their march was most disastrous, and numbers perished by the way. At length they settled at Odessa; but the Russian government transported them to Georgia, where it was hoped that their industry would set an example to the inhabitants of the country. They were at first without religious instruction; but some German missionaries, who had devoted themselves to the instruction of the Armenians, having witnessed their destitute condition, applied to the consistory of Bâle; and though the Russian government at first threw some difficulties in their way, pastors were procured, and the Emperor has since granted them a small salary. In appearance the

colonists are as German as when they left Wirtemburg, now eighteen years ago, and the sandy-headed little urchins playing round their doors bid fair to perpetuate the race.

CHAPTER XIII.

Departure from Tiflis — Post-horses — Mtskheta — Aragvi — Douzethi — Unlucky Detention — Cossack Singing — Ananouri — Pasanaouri — Cashaour — Dangerous Passes — Kobi — Drunken Post-Master — Mount Kasbek — Pass of Dariel — Vladikawkas.

September 7th.—I QUITTED Tiflis at half-past eight, and though my equipage would have cut a curious figure in St. James's Street, here it was quite the thing. Three shaggy little horses driven by a dirty Cossack, clad in sheep-skin, rattled me along merrily enough through the town, but the very first hill plainly told me that I should require an additional pair, for we came to a dead stand. For about twenty versts we followed the course of the Kour through a cheerful country abounding in orchards and vineyards. From Tiflis one lofty chain of the Caucasus is visible in clear weather, the highest peak of which,

Mount Kasbek, is always capped with snow, and now bounded our view to the north. At the point where the Kour, descending from the hills of Imeretia, bends at a right angle to the southward, we still followed the right bank until we reached a bridge, which we crossed, and retracing our steps on the left bank, we entered the miserable village of Mtskheta, now a mere heap of ruins, but in remote ages the capital of Georgia. So early as the year 469 of the Christian era the seat of government was removed to Tiflis, but Mtskheta long continued a town of some importance, till it was laid in ashes by the destroyer Timour. The walls of a large church are the only relics of its ancient splendour. We now quitted the Kour and tracked the course of the Aragvi, one of its tributaries. Thirty versts more brought us to the town of Douzethi, built on a sloping bank which overlooks a cheerful and cultivated country studded with Georgian villages. A small fort commands the town, and is gar-

risoned by half a battalion. There is, indeed, scarcely a village in Georgia, however inconsiderable, which does not contain a detachment of infantry.

My horses were already harnessed, and I was about to proceed, when my German servant, by some ill-luck, chanced to hit upon a countryman who invited him to dinner. I was good-natured enough to give him my permission, but hardly had he left me when a "feld jager," or courier, from Petersburg galloped into the square, and there being no other horses at home, mine were taken out and transferred to his post-waggon, in spite of all my remonstrances. Poor Peter was quite aghast when he saw the mischief his gross appetite had made, and vowed that he would sooner have gone without his dinner the whole day than have been the cause of my detention—a wish in which I cordially joined.

Evening closed in and no horses had returned, so I made the best of a bad job, and bade Peter prepare dinner for me at his

friend's, who keeps almost the only tavern between Tiflis and the baths. I afterwards strolled out into the square to enjoy the evening breeze. I had just ensconced myself in the corner of my britchka, when the sound of music caught my ear, and I listened with real pleasure to the singing of a picket of Cossacks grouped round the gate of the post-house. The air was generally slow and plaintive, but one lively little song of the Don haunted me the whole night through.

September 8th.—At eight in the morning several teams returned, and as soon as the horses had been fed, we once more got under weigh, and at a brisk trot ascended the long hill which lay before us. On reaching the summit the leaders were unhooked, and the descent was uninterrupted as far as Ananouri. We skirted a range of hills which form the northern boundary of the deep and fertile valley which lay below us to our left; above us the hills were clothed with tufted woods, but the axe had encroached upon the forest,

and wherever the mountain side was not so steep as to forbid cultivation, rich fields of yellow corn were waiting for the sickle. Numerous hamlets were perched upon the plateaux which projected from the mountain side high above our heads; and I have always remarked that the Georgians choose an elevated situation for their villages.

Our next stage was Pasanouri, a small military post lying in one of the prettiest and most secluded little nooks that can be imagined. The postmaster at first refused to let me have any horses, because he had only twelve in the stable, and he had been ordered to keep that number in gentle exercise until the arrival of the Emperor. Considering that it wanted almost two months to the Emperor's coming, and that no exercise could be better for them than to run the stage along which they were to have the honour of drawing the imperial carriage, I thought the refusal somewhat unreasonable, and appealed to the commandant, who, like a second Daniel, decided,

but not without some deliberation, that as they had furnished me with horses at the preceding post, there could be no great harm in passing me on. Near Pasanouri is a quarantine station, used only when the plague is raging in Georgia.

We soon made up the time we had lost, for the road was smooth and level for the first twelve miles. Leaving the bed of the Aragvi we then toiled for nearly an hour of steep and uninterrupted ascent, and reached Cashaour just as daylight deserted us. Meanwhile the moon had risen in time to light us down the dangerous passes of the "Gootgora," and the "Krestawa-gora," where we had to lock the hind-wheels and unspan our leaders. Unless the misty light of the moon deceived me, the road skirted the very brink of some tremendous precipice: at times the moon was veiled behind dark masses of clouds, and the surrounding scene bore a resemblance to the stormy ocean; round us on every side rose dark swelling masses like

gigantic waves, and the white crests of some of the loftier ranges, which still caught the moon-beams, were like the curl of some tremendous billow; above us was a stormy sky, across the face of which a strong northwester drove the heavy clouds, which would otherwise have broken into torrents of rain.

It was midnight when we reached Kobi, and the drunken post-master positively refused me horses. A Russian officer, who was travelling the same road, kindly took up the cudgels for me, and they set-to abusing each other in no measured terms, in the midst of which I fell asleep, and was only wakened by a sudden jerk which nearly threw me off my seat. Peter informed me that the two combatants, after exhausting the vocabulary of abuse, had mutually apologized for any uncivil terms which might have dropped from them in the heat of the discussion, kissed each other lovingly on either cheek, and then the horses had been produced. It was quite dark during the next stage, and in spite of

the jolting I contrived to sleep pretty soundly When I awoke day had begun to dawn, and the carriage was standing at the door of the post-house in the little village of Kasbek. On the opposite side of the valley of the Terek rose the noble mountain of the same name, worthy of the fiction which has assigned it as the place of punishment of Prometheus.

So deep was the valley through which our road now led, that for several hours we travelled in the deepest shade. On either side the mountains rose like stupendous walls of granite, from every cliff and ledge of which, wherever they could find a scanty nourishment, protruded stunted pines. It almost made me giddy to look up these precipices; a thousand jutting crags seemed ready to detach themselves and crush the passing traveller. We soon reached the pass of Dariel, the gate of the Caucasus, where the rocks so nearly meet that their base is washed by the foaming Terek, and the road is excavated in the solid rock overhanging the furious

THE PASS OF DARIEL.

stream. Near the entrance of the pass are seen the ruins of an ancient fortress, which commanded the passage of the Caucasus, and which was long garrisoned by the Arabs. It was here that I first perceived the gigantic scale of this mountain scenery. The perpendicular walls which form the portal of the gate, and which the eye in vain essays to measure, are in proportion to the mountains behind them but as the pedestal to the tall column, yet these latter are entirely free from snow, and rank as pigmies beside Mount Elburz, Kasbek, and the other monarchs of the Caucasus.

After passing Dariel the road became at every step less precipitous, and the mountains, gradually opening out on every side, disclosed the wide plain of the Kabarda. At intervals of half-a-mile pickets were posted on commanding sites, with horses ready saddled, and beacons to give instant notice of a night-attack from the mountaineers. At length we left the Caucasus behind us, and

entered on the plain. The Terek, now no longer pent up in its narrow bed, flows silently but still discoloured between grassy banks; before us lay the fort of Vladikawkas, on the site of a more ancient castle. A large force is stationed here, whose only duty is to escort the post across the dangerous plain of the Kabarda. The heavy post, which arrives once a week from Petersburg, is guarded by a hundred men, and one, or sometimes two, field-pieces; the extra, or light post, which is also weekly, is escorted by a patrol of Cossacks, to which is generally added a detachment of infantry, one foot-soldier being more feared by the Circassians than a dozen Cossacks. I secured horses without delay, as I was to cross the Kabarda with the convoy of the post, which was hourly expected. There are no post-horses kept here, but any number may be hired from the soldiers, who are allowed to turn a penny in this way.

September 10*th*.—Vladikawkas contains no inn of any description; the only accommoda-

tion for strangers consists of a wooden building containing a dozen small rooms with tables and wooden bedsteads. Unless you have your cook with you, you will be able to procure nothing on the road, except the coarse brown bread and cheese which are sold by the road-side.

CHAPTER XIV.

March across the Kabarda—Escort—Kabardans Checheuses —Heavy Post—Ardonskoi—Ekaterinograd—Cossacks of the Line—Stanitzas—Georgievsk—Capital Posting—Petigorsky —Colony of Karras—Mr. Dittrich—German Pastors.

Soon after sunset we commenced our march, with a small escort of six Cossacks and twelve foot-soldiers. The mail was carried on horse-back, but there were several private carriages besides mine: some of these were driven by women—my driver was an old soldier. Our progress was very slow, that our guards might keep up with us. As far as the first station of Ardonskoi, five-and-twenty miles, there is an uninterrupted chain of pickets by the road-side. The plain is covered with the richest pasturage, in many places growing to the height of several feet, abundantly watered with streams of the clearest water, and varied

by occasional patches of wood. During the night our little convoy kept close together; for, only a few days before, the Chechenses, a tribe of the Circassians, as we call all these mountaineers, had carried off some stragglers. To our right, but divided from us by the river Terek, lay numerous villages inhabited by the Kabardans, who have submitted to the rule of Russia, but have not yet lost their taste for pillage. It is known that they frequently afford shelter and assistance to the marauding parties of their countrymen; which they cannot well avoid doing, as the Russian government is not strong enough to protect them from the vengeance of the Chechenses. The similarity of costume greatly facilitates the inroads of these highlanders, who may roam about the plain under the semblance of Kabardans, or Cossacks of the Line, until they meet with their prey.

Soon after quitting Vladikawkas we met the heavy post, in the train of which were, at least, a hundred waggons, some drawn by

horses, some by oxen, and mostly laden with supplies for the army of Georgia.

Ardonskoi is one of those small Russian forts so common on the frontiers of Circassia, beyond the range of whose guns its inmates are not safe. Its situation is isolated, and its sole use is to shelter the garrison which furnishes the escort. While the horses were feeding, and the escort being relieved, I strolled to the gate, and the sentry would hardly permit me to pass out. I wanted to walk round the little fort, but had not been five minutes without the gate, when several soldiers, with lanterns, came in search of me. And this is the only road by which Russia communicates with the provinces of Georgia and Armenia!

Our escort of cavalry having been increased, and our footmen reduced to six, I set the example of stowing away two of them about my carriage; the remainder soon found places, and we mended our pace. Little occurred to break the monotony of the next

day's journey, for the weather was so hazy as to shut out the distant mountains. Sometimes our escort would load their muskets with shot and bring down a wood-pigeon or a pheasant. Twice during the day we changed our guards at forts similar to that of Ardonskoi, and at midnight we reached the quarantine station of Ekaterinograd, where we had to remain till sunrise, to receive our certificates from the medical officer in charge.

We joined a motley group, who were lying round their watch-fires awaiting, like ourselves, the approach of day: numerous other parties were scattered round us on every side, like gipsy encampments; and behind us stood a dense phalanx of vehicles of every description, some drawn by oxen, some by horses, and those of the mountaineers by shaggy ponies, with manes and tails that swept the ground. At day-break all was alive in our bivouac; and as each group raised itself from the ground, so varied were the costumes, and so characteristic the features of each, that no

two appeared to belong to the same nation. In one point only were they alike—all, however peaceful their calling, were armed as if for battle.

I had taken the precaution of bringing a bill of health from Tiflis, but even that would not have saved me from annoyance, had I not discovered the medical man to be the brother of the surgeon to the Russian embassy at Tehran. My effects were all fumigated, and I was permitted to depart to the adjoining town. A wooden bridge, thrown across the river Malka, communicates with Ekaterinograd, a military post of about the same size as Vladikawkas. The Malka, after receiving the waters of the Terek a few miles from hence, flows into the Caspian, assuming the name of the latter river. The Cossacks of the Line, whose villages are on its banks, are said to be the most efficient of that class of cavalry; and I have been told that the skirmishes between them and the Circassians are the prettiest sight imaginable. They

have adopted the Circassian dress, and in action they often take off their caps, that their long hair may distinguish them from their Moslem adversaries. The plain of the Kabarda terminates at the Malka. Its width at this point is a hundred and five versts, upwards of seventy miles; a distance which the post requires three days to traverse. Beyond Ekaterinograd an escort is no longer necessary.

September 11th.—We now entered upon those vast plains, or steppes, which stretch from the shores of the Caspian and the Euxine far into the heart of Russia, and form a dreary barrier between Asia and Europe. The weather was delicious, the roads without a rut or stone, and the posting worthy of England; but the clouds of dust, which nothing could exclude, were stifling, and prevented all enjoyment. This steppe is very thinly peopled by the Cossacks of the Line, who dwell in villages called "stanitzas," which consist of one long street of white-

washed cottages, between which the road passes. The large farm-yards, surrounded by wattled sheds, abounded in pigs and poultry, while waggon-loads of water-melons bespoke the richness of the soil. At the extremity of the stanitza stands the post-house, with its high watch-tower, from which a vigilant look-out is kept.

Late in the afternoon I reached Georgievsk, where I intended passing the night, but could not procure a shelter for my head. As I have said before, this barbarous country offers no accommodation to travellers; and the prospect of a comfortable inn and a good supper urged me onwards, the baths being only forty versts farther. The horses were put to, and quitting the main road to Moscow, we rattled at a merry gallop across a slightly undulating country. After the tedious slowness of Persian travelling, the contrast was delightful. I threw back the head of the britchka, and, wrapping myself in my fur cloak—for the evening was clear and cold—I experienced a

boyish delight as we sped along the turf, to the merry sound of bells and the wild cries of the Cossacks.

In less than three hours we pulled up at the barrier of Petigorsky; and the white houses of this Russian Cheltenham rose before us, in successive terraces, conspicuous in the moonlight. We drew up at the grand hotel —a bowing waiter ushered me into a well-furnished saloon—and I was soon agreeably employed in the discussion of a light supper.

September 13*th*.—There is a loneliness about a deserted watering-place more striking than that of any other town. Broad and formal avenues, with temples on every hill and grottoes in every nook, large staring hotels and pump-rooms with long colonnades, are animated scenes when filled with gay and noisy groups in search of pleasure more than health; but dull enough to give one the blue-devils when one meets only a few wretched invalids crawling along like flies in December.

Such was the case with Petigorsky when I

arrived: a few officers alone lingered there, some maimed by the sword of the Circassian, —the greater number prostrated by the deadly climate of the shores of the Black Sea. One poor fellow, with several medals and crosses, applied to me for charity.

All the world had migrated to Kislavodsky, or the acid waters, and thither I resolved to follow them. The cook of this hotel, an artist of some celebrity, was to depart on the morrow for Tiflis, having been engaged to cater for the imperial palate — another argument against my staying. I dined at the table d'hôte; there were but two guests besides myself, the one a member of my own profession, the other an Armenian, who, having been in Persia, would address me in that language, though he could hardly make himself intelligible. My friend might have been mistaken for an Italian from his appearance; and, indeed, I have remarked that both the features and the animated manner of the Europeanized Armenian approach nearer to the Italian

than to those of any other nation. The officer was a merry, good-humoured soldier, superior to the usual run, and spoke French with fluency. After dinner I hired a light droshky with three horses, and drove over to the Scottish colony of Karras, seven versts from Petigorsky. My driver had been for many years in the British navy, but he had almost forgotten his English; his predilection for grog, I was informed, he had not forgotten.

The situation of Petigorsky is not picturesque. Five hills, from which it derives its name, rise abruptly from the plain, quite unconnected with any other chain. Their chalk or limestone cliffs reflect the heat most powerfully upon the town which skirts their base. So insecure is this neighbourhood that the huts of a battalion of infantry adjoin the baths. Within a mile or two of Petigorsky the hills are clothed with wood, and the site of the little Scottish colony is very rural and pretty. But the look of security and peace which the thatched cottages and village church

assume at a distance is sadly contradicted on a near approach by the sight of a field-piece standing on the village-green, and sentries posted in the orchards which surround the farms.

Karras is now a Scottish colony only in name, for the original settlers have long since quitted the spot, with the exception of two families, and their places have been occupied by German colonists from the banks of the Volga. Karras was selected as the site of a missionary colony from Scotland, who first settled there at the beginning of this century, and entered zealously into the duty of educating the Circassians. It was, I believe, the Church Missionary Society which sent them. For some years their labours prospered: they made converts, and ransomed many children from the Circassians, whom they instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. At length the Russian government narrowed the field of their labour, by publishing an ukase forbidding converts being made throughout the empire

to any but the Greek church. In consequence of this the colonists dispersed, some to Astracan, others to their native country, and two alone have remained. I was welcomed in broad Scotch by Mrs. Lang, the wife of the pastor, a daughter of one of the original settlers. Her mother was a Circassian, but she shows no signs of her Oriental descent. The pastor himself is a Swiss. At his house I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Dittrich, who has the charge of all the German churches throughout Georgia. He is a most excellent man, a good Oriental scholar, and zealously devoted to his missionary duties. He was first sent among the Armenians; but, on the death of Mr. Saltet, he succeeded to his present employment. His unwearied exertions in the unhealthy provinces bordering on the Caspian have broken his constitution, and though still in the prime of life his hair is white as silver.

After an hour's interesting conversation, I was about to return to Petigorsky, when one

of the colonists requested that I would accompany Mr. Dittrich, who was coming to his house to drink a cup of tea. I accepted his invitation gladly, and found the principal inhabitants of the colony assembled round a table which displayed an almost more than German neatness. They were a most respectable and intelligent body of men, and their frank, yet respectful, manner towards their pastors was pleasing to witness. They, on their part, seemed to interest themselves sincerely in the welfare of their parishioners, and were at once the friend and teacher.

The German clergy are remarkably well adapted to win the confidence and esteem of the lower orders. They are themselves ordinarily of the same rank of life; their habits and wants are equally simple; and it is their superior education alone which distinguishes them from their congregation. Add to this, that they are generally men of unexceptionable character, and earnest in their calling.

Among the guests was a venerable old man,

the pastor of a neighbouring colony, who was quite overjoyed when he discovered that I had been educated at Hofwyl. His father had been the clergyman of the adjoining village, whose church I had frequently attended. A few years ago the Circassians made a descent upon his little colony and carried off four children from the school. The old man made a vain resistance: three times the ruffians presented a musket to his breast, and three times it providentially missed fire. At length a ball through his arm laid him prostrate, and the mountaineers decamped with their booty, leaving him for dead.

CHAPTER XV.

Kislavodsky — Acid Spring — Fortunate Rencontre—Russian Family—Cold Bath—Drunken Cossack—Return to Petigorsky—Colony of Karras—Comfortable Quarters—Songs of the Don—Circassian Converts—Ferruginous Springs—Circassian Forays.

WHEN I returned to Petigorsky I learnt that I was again a day after the fair. On the preceding night a grand ball had been given at Kislavodsky, after which the fiddlers had packed up their fiddles, the restaurateur had shut up his shop, and the fashionables had taken their departure. However, I was not to be deterred; and on the morrow, after an early breakfast, I was once more on the move.

September 13th.—The road was monotonous; the only interesting object was Mount Elburz, plainly visible, though at a great distance to our left. The little watering-place lies in a secluded valley, far less formal than the staring

town of Petigorsky. In place of rows of stuccoed houses, pretty cottages were scattered here and there, half concealed amid the artificial woods; while in lieu of the long, straight esplanades, the grounds were here laid out in English gardens. In the centre of an open plot, an iron rail surrounds the spring, which bursts forth in great volumes, sparkling like champagne. It is said that on the occupation of the country by the Russians the Circassians closed the original spring with enormous stones, and that it forced its way above ground at the spot where it now flows.

The hotel being closed I was fain to rent a small room at the extravagant rate of a ducat a-day; and, having despatched the faithful Peter on a foraging expedition, I sallied forth in quest of adventures. A few fair water-nymphs were sipping at the fountain, while their attendant swains, with little goblets dangling by a string, supplied them with the sparkling beverage. When I had bored myself sufficiently, I turned my steps home-

wards, where I found Peter vainly attempting to fricassee an old fowl over a smoky fire. An elderly gentleman, with a benevolent countenance, taking compassion on my friendless, supperless condition, came up to me, and, after some conversation, invited me to his apartments, where we drank tea. I soon discovered him to be a Pole; and, as I afterwards learnt, he had been a member of the Diet during the last revolution, for which he had been banished to the Caucasus—a milder exile than Siberia. He was a remarkably gentlemanlike, agreeable man, quite *au courant* of English politics, of which he gave me many interesting details. In the evening I accompanied him on a visit to a family from Moscow, where we passed a pleasant hour. The father had been a military man, and served in Italy as aid-de-camp to Souvoroff, after which he had made a lucky hit in commerce, and realized an ample fortune. The mother, a good-humoured, portly dame, and two rather pretty daughters, spoke English fluently:

no unusual accomplishment in Russia, where so many of the nurses are English. On returning home, my kind friend insisted upon ordering supper, having discovered that I had not dined, and I fear that my performances must have belied my assurance that I was not hungry. I carried off a file of German papers, and it was late before I could make up my mind to retire to bed.

September 14*th*.—In the morning my host introduced me to several young officers of the first families in Russia, whom the desire to distinguish themselves in the only field now open to them had brought to Georgia. These I found comparatively free from national prejudices and peculiarity of manner, for good society, in whatever capital it be found, moulds men in one conventional form common to the gentleman of every nation. We all strolled down to the spring, around which the few remaining visitors were congregated; and, having joined our acquaintances of the preceding evening, we walked with them along

the winding path till it conducted us to the cantonment of a regiment stationed here for the protection of the water-drinkers. The old lady gave me an interesting description of the burning of Moscow, of which she had been an eye-witness. Before dinner I hurried to the bath into which the said spring empties itself; the temperature is very low, and the cold almost took away my breath. However, one old gentleman of eighty was there, who bathed three times each day. Surely he must have become seasoned to cold in Siberia. After dinner I bade my kind host farewell, and drove back to Petigorsky. On the road a Cossack officer passed me at full gallop, reeling in his saddle; an orderly was at his heels, and several orders proclaimed him an officer of rank. In spite of being so drunk he sat his horse wonderfully, and, wheeling him sharp round, bowed to me with an air of drunken gravity.

I arrived at Petigorsky in time to take a stroll through the gardens, which are every-

where threaded by trellised avenues overgrown with clustering vines. The bathing establishments are large and well arranged; the water is hot, and strongly impregnated with sulphur.

September 18th.—Being in no hurry to return to Tiflis, I determined to remain over Sunday in the colony of Karras, especially as my carriage needed some repair before recrossing the Caucasus. I rented a neat sitting-room and bed-room in one of the farm-houses which had struck my fancy on my previous visit, and before evening I was comfortably installed. My landlord, a Saxon, was a blunt, homely farmer; my landlady, a model of housewifery, and two pretty daughters, neatness itself.

The weather was delightful during my stay; the heat of summer was past, and the breeze from the mountains was fresh and balmy. Most thoroughly did I enjoy the lovely scenery and climate. The verdure of summer was beginning to give place to the rich tints of autumn, and the orchards were bending be-

neath their load of fruit. The change of life, from restless travel to the quiet of the little village, was most welcome; and the homely fare of the German colonists was sweeter to me than all the delicacies of Persian cookery. The home-baked loaf, fresh butter, and rich cream, were luxuries to which I had been long a stranger; and the heartfelt kindness of my worthy hostess and her daughters was quite refreshing. They would often bring their work into my room, for fear that I should feel lonely; and it was kindness, not curiosity, which prompted them. My days were spent in reading, and in strolling through the neighbourhood, although the sentries, posted in our very garden, warned me not to wander far, and often checked my steps when some winding path had tempted me into the outskirts of the forest. In the evening it was my delight to sit in the little garden and listen to the songs of the Cossacks, whose guard-house fronted the village-church. These wild natives of the Don possess a taste for music which the

most civilized nations might be proud of; but it was not the harmony which struck me most: it was the subject of their singing. I heard no noisy songs in praise of drunkenness, such as the barracks of some European nations resound with; all theirs were in praise of their distant country and its maidens.

On Sunday I attended service at the village-church, which was crowded. A few Circassians were present, the converts of the early missionaries. One of these gentlemen, whom I have since met, related to me that a traveller coming down the Volga to Astracan was astonished to hear himself addressed in broad Scotch by a Circassian; but, if all their teachers spoke their native tongue as broad as my informant did, there was no cause to wonder. The German service is, like the Presbyterian, extempore, and is impressive in proportion only to the eloquence of the preacher. I dined with the worthy pastor at noon, or rather made my breakfast while he dined.

September 19th.—On the morrow I rode to the ferruginous springs, to which the water-drinkers from Petigorsky resort for a fortnight before finishing their course at Kislavodsky. My host assured me that he had procured for me the handsomest horse in the village; and, indeed, the beast was worthy of a trumpeter of the life-guards, being cream-coloured, with a long flowing mane and tail. My holsters had been buckled round the animal's neck by these skilful grooms. My guide was a young German, who, with several comrades, had been carried off some years before by the Circassians, and he pointed out to me the very spot where the party had surprised them. He did not complain of their harsh treatment, but told me that both they and their conductors had suffered severely from hunger on their march into the interior. They remained some months with their captors near the foot of Mount Elburz, the most magnificent country in the world according to his description; and their duty was to tend the flocks, which fur-

nished the principal subsistence of the tribe. After some months they were privately ransomed by their parents, it being strictly forbidden by the Russian Government to effect the liberation of any captives otherwise than by exchange. This regulation, though at first sight it may appear harsh, is judicious; for the system of ransom would be an additional inducement to the plunderers, and render the situation of the poor colonists still more insecure. In a neighbouring colony, not very long ago, the mountaineers came down during church-time and literally swept the fields of every head of cattle. Last year a horrid scene occurred close to the colony of Karras. An unfortunate colonist, a German, was in his little field, not half a mile from his own threshold, with his wife and four young children, when a party of Circassians suddenly fell upon them. The man was shot and left for dead, while the poor children were forcibly torn from their mother's arms, and carried off into the mountains. No trace has since been

found of them, and the poor father with difficulty recovered from his wounds. These mountaineers do not care for the Cossacks, who, though good foragers, are a most inefficient cavalry.

The situation of the iron-springs is wild and picturesque, almost buried in the recesses of the forest, which is threaded by a hundred winding paths, all very pretty, but by no means safe.

CHAPTER XVI.

Return to Ekaterinograd—Opportune Arrival of a Courier—Recross the Kabarda—Supper at Vladikawkas — Passage of the Caucasus — Express from Tiflis — Arrival at the German Colony.

On the 19th I left the colony, and I grieve to say that my good opinion of the colonists received a considerable shake by the appearance of a most unconscionable bill, exceeding those of the expensive hotels at the Baths. My servant blushed for his countrymen as he presented it. An intelligent young German drove me to Petigorsky, where I found post-horses, and proceeded without delay to Paulovskai. The rain came down in torrents, and the dust, of which I complained on my way to the baths, was changed into deep mud, which greatly impeded our pro-

gress. Finding a vacant room, I waited till morning, and resumed my journey to Ekaterinograd.

At first I feared that I should have to wait the arrival of the heavy post, and to travel at its tedious pace, but my usual good fortune did not desert me. The prospect from my window was certainly not lively: it looked upon a little court, where several hungry pigs were squabbling over damaged water-melons, which a slipshod damsel was throwing down from the window above my head. The jingling of bells drew me to the window, and I found that an express had that moment arrived from Petersburg, and that an escort would be furnished him without delay. I had already secured horses, and I offered the "feldjager," who was an officer, a seat in my carriage across the Kabarda, an offer which the poor devil, well jolted by his long and rapid journey, most gladly jumped at. Within an hour we were once more on the plain; and on the morning of the 22nd we reached

Vladikawkas. A fat old general attempted to avail himself of the opportunity of a safe convoy, but his three wretched horses soon declined, and his fair charioteer came to a stand-still in the most dangerous part of the road. We left a few Cossacks with him, and I believe that he got off with his alarm.

The distant view of the Caucasus at sunrise was extremely grand. A recent fall had multiplied the snowy peaks, and they alone were visible above the dense vapour which arose from the subjacent forests. From their fantastic shapes and dazzling whiteness they might have been mistaken for clouds. Unfortunately the scene of enchantment lasted but a few moments; vapours rising and clouds lowering quickly formed an impenetrable veil which thickened at every moment.

In the afternoon my servant came to me with the intelligence that he had fallen in with a countrywoman, at whose house Mr. Dittrich had stopped; and added, that she would be very happy to prepare supper for

me that evening. I incautiously agreed to go, and, instead of the homely "haus frau," whom I had expected to see, I found a smart lady, pretty, but vulgar, the wife of the fort-adjutant. She insisted upon not waiting for her husband, who was at his office; and when that worthy at length made his appearance, a sulky-looking old fellow, all moustache and epaulette, I felt almost as awkward as if he had detected me making love to his wife. However, the fair lady was at no loss for an explanation; and, after a short debate in Russian, the good man became all smiles and civility, though the former did not seem to sit naturally upon his grim features. I beat a retreat as soon as I could escape from his interminable stories of the Turkish campaign, slipping a piece of gold into the hand of a curly-headed little brat, whose features and complexion announced his Saxon blood.

September 23rd.—The post was to arrive from Tiflis this evening, and, as I expected

letters from England, I remained at Vladikawkas. I was, however, disappointed, and on the morning of the 24th I began to retrace my steps across the Caucasus. The weather was miserable: a drizzling rain penetrated into the inmost recesses of the carriage, and a heavy mist concealed the mountains. I am told that I was most fortunate in having had fine weather on my way to the Baths, for in this mountainous region storms are very prevalent at all times of the year. I halted for the night at Kobi, against my will, but the postmaster refused to furnish me with horses on so dark a night. I here found a Cossack whom the governor-general had despatched from Tiflis, with orders to follow me to Petigorsky; he was the bearer of a letter from my old school-companion, Prince Souvoroff, grandson of the old marshal, who was serving in Georgia, on the staff of the governor-general. After expressing the pleasure with which he had heard of my arrival in the country, he urged my returning without delay to Tiflis, in order

to be present at the forthcoming visit of the Emperor. This letter set my mind at rest, for I could not help thinking that they might throw difficulties in my way to prevent my witnessing the reception of the Emperor. The presence of the Cossack was sufficient to remove my fears of being stopped for want of horses, which would otherwise unavoidably have been my fate, since all but two or three relays had been removed to the road from the Black Sea, by which the Emperor was expected. The night was very stormy, and the wind howled mournfully through the long corridors of our barrack; my neighbour was an old colonel, who travelled with a heavy carriage and a fourgon, each requiring six horses, and it was necessary to get the start of him.

As soon as day began to dawn I was in my carriage, while the colonel still lay in the arms of Morpheus. It had rained violently the whole night through, and now, although the sky above was clear and starry, heavy

banks of fog obscured the horizon. Heaps of loose earth had been thrown upon the road to cover the sharp rocks which burst through the thin covering of soil, and now that all was saturated, our horses sank above their fetlocks at every step. A long and steep ascent terminated at Casziaour, and from thence the road improved. Some hours of daylight still remained when we entered Douzethi, the scene of my former detention. At the door of the post-house I recognised an officer who had preceded me by two days, but who was detained for want of horses. I sent my Cossack to the postmaster, who immediately furnished me with couriers' horses. At the next stage I found my own horses waiting for me, for I had intended making a short detour on the Koutais road, to see some curious fossils which Dr. Riach had discovered near the bed of the river Kour. But as the post-house was crowded, and Baron Rosen was expected the following morning, on his way to meet the Emperor at Poti, I thought

it more prudent to take horses while I could get them, and proceeded forthwith to Tiflis, where I arrived just as the clock of the cathedral was tolling twelve. Crossing the Kour, I drove to the German colony, where I found my quarters ready.

CHAPTER XVII.

Old School-fellow—Soirée at the Baroness Rosen's—Change of quarters — General Valkhovsky — Hospitality — Baron Dieskau — State of the German colonies — Censorship—Books — Gymnasium — Formal party — Church of New Tiflis.

September 26th.—AFTER breakfast I mounted one of my horses, which had quite picked up their condition during my absence, and cantered into town. Souvoroff welcomed me most cordially, and, though we had known each other but slightly at Hofwyl, yet, in this remote spot, our old companionship soon ripened into intimacy. He, like myself, had been a wanderer since last we met; and, as we compared our adventures by sea and land, we looked back with pleasure and regret to those happy days when, with our knapsacks

on our backs, we had climbed the hills of Switzerland. A young German professor belonging to the University of Weimar, who was visiting the provinces of the Caucasus in pursuit of his botanical researches, occupied the only vacant apartment in Souvoroff's house, which would otherwise have been at my disposal.

September 27th.—Baroness Rosen was at home this evening, and Souvoroff persuaded me to accompany him to the palace. The party was small, and, the evening being fine, we assembled on the terrace in front of the drawing-room windows. The baroness, who is descended from one of the oldest families of Russia, is an exceedingly pompous old lady: the daughters are good-humoured German girls, with flaxen hair and fair complexions. The eldest, who had been lately married to the Prince Dadian, colonel of the grenadiers of Georgia, is a pretty blonde; but the Countess Simonich, with her sparkling eyes and raven hair, threw her Saxon com-

panions quite into shade. The terrace overlooked the river Kour, and in the stillness of the night we could distinctly hear the ripple of the current. Large trays of the most delicious fruit were handed round, succeeded by tea. Music was proposed, but all were unwilling to exchange the evening freshness for the close saloon.

Monsieur Rodofinikin and General Valkhovsky, the chief of the staff, called upon me at the colony, and offered to find quarters for me in a more central situation. On the morrow I returned the general's visit, and was received with great civility. The quarters of a colonel of engineers adjoining his own house were fortunately vacant, and he placed them at my disposal. I willingly accepted the offer, and moved into my new house the same afternoon, for I had already found the distance from the town a great inconvenience, desirous, as I was, to enter into the society of the place. My sitting-room looked out upon the square where all parades were held,

and behind the house was a small court where my stud was picketed. In case of rain there was a two-stalled stable for my own horses, and plenty of room for the remainder under a wattled shed.

The general kindly hoped that, when not otherwise engaged, I would join their family party, with whom he made me acquainted. Madame Valkhovsky is a very lady-like, pleasing person, with a retiring manner: she speaks English correctly, as indeed do all the inmates of the house, except the general. There is an aunt of her's who lives with them, a delightful old lady, born and educated in England, and quite English in her appearance. I never heard her name, for, according to Russian custom, every one called her "Anna Andrevna," Anne the daughter of Andrew. Then there was Mr. Feh, the general's aide-de-camp, who had also lived many years in England, to which he seemed to look back with pleasure. His history is curious, though by no means sin-

gular in Russia. He was in the civil service, and held a good appointment in Bessarabia, but, having killed his antagonist in an unfortunate duel, he was "destitué," as it is termed, and though, as I have said, not a military man, was condemned to serve as a private soldier in the army of Georgia. After ten years of service in the ranks, he has at length earned his epaulettes.

Now that I was fairly established in Tiflis, I began to enter into the society of the place, and there were several houses where I could always reckon on a good dinner and a cordial welcome. In the evening too many were glad to see their friends; and as the dinner-hour was early, and there were no public amusements in Tiflis, I often availed myself of this custom. Many of those whose houses I frequented were foreigners, who form a very large portion of the class of Russian employés. An adventurer, who styled himself the Baron Dieskau, who had the impudence to pass himself off for an English Elchee

among the Affghans, and the knavery to procure money in that character, expressed himself desirous of making my acquaintance—an honour which I declined, knowing rather more about him than he reckoned upon. He is an officer in the Russian service, into which he has been admitted since his doings in Affghanistan. Any one, indeed, who has been in India, whatever may have been the cause of his quitting the country, is received by Baron Rosen into the Russian service.

I rode to New Tiflis to call upon Mr. Dittrich, with whom I had an interesting conversation on the subject of the German colonies. I was sorry to learn from him that they had not flourished as might have been anticipated. Many causes conduced to this: the unhealthy situation of some, the poverty of the land of others, and the want of capital of all. He also told me that great disunion prevailed among the colonists, principally from differences of religious opinion. The colony of New Tiflis consisted entirely of tradesmen or

mechanics, the want of water forbidding their turning their attention to agriculture. Those who were masters of their art, or whose trade was lucrative, soon moved into the city, and scarcely any but the poor remained. Some few, indeed, make money by letting out carriages and horses, but the greater number earn a meagre subsistence by washing, selling milk and butter, and making hams and sausages.

Mr. Dittrich told me that the measures of the Russian government towards the colonists were liberal and judicious, and imputed their failure to circumstances not under its control.

The French consul is only allowed to receive the "Journal des Débats" on the condition of not showing it to any Russian subject. Whenever any article appears which is condemned in Petersburg the guilty number is enclosed in cartridge-paper, and sealed with the seal of the censorship, a sort of political quarantine. The "Petersburg Gazette,"—a scanty little sheet, containing no informa-

tion,—is the only paper seen in Georgia. Although Tiflis contains so large an European population it possesses no public library, nor indeed even a bookseller's shop. The only publications that I saw exposed for sale were Russian dictionaries, and a history of the campaign in Turkey, published by authority. In only one of the many houses that I was in did I see any symptoms of a book-case. Thus debarred from the only rational mode of employing their time, it is no wonder that the Russian officers should fall into those habits of gambling and dissipation so prevalent among them. With the exception of a few young men of good family, who have joined the army in Georgia in the hopes of distinguishing themselves in the only field now open to them, the officers are seldom gentlemen by birth or education, and disgraceful scenes not unfrequently occur unnoticed, which in our service would justly cost a man his commission.

There is at Tiflis a gymnasium for the edu-

cation of boys of all nations, in which much attention is paid to the study of Oriental languages, the knowledge of which is a certain stepping-stone to advancement in the Russian service. One young man who was studying at this gymnasium called frequently upon me. By birth he was a Hindoo, by religion a Mahommedan, and whenever I had a vacant hour he would come and talk to me about his native country, which he sighed to revisit. There was also a young Egyptian, a clever little lad, at the same establishment.

September 29th.—As I was returning from a late ride, a string of carriages before the palace-gates announced that there was a party at the Baroness Rosen's. I dressed, and went to make my bow. The ladies were drawn up in the most formal and formidable half-circle that I ever faced, while the gentlemen at the other end of the apartment were following their own devices. Many of the ladies, indeed the larger number, were Georgians, in their national costume,—a dress well cal-

culated to disfigure the prettiest face and form. One gentleman alone had ventured within the magic circle, an aide-de-camp of the Emperor's, just arrived, who had been sent on before to see that the parades and guard-mounting were performed according to the latest fashions of the capital. He was a colonel of the Imperial Guards, a handsome, soldierlike man, agreeable, and well-informed. I followed his example, and attempted to engage some of my fair neighbours in conversation, but scarcely one of them understood any European language. It was very up-hill work, and I soon had had enough. In the ante-room I met young Count Shouvaloff, whose acquaintance I had made at Petigorsky, and whose manner had pleased me much. He is heir to one of the most princely fortunes in Russia, but has left the gaieties of the capital to win laurels in the Caucasus. He is quite enthusiastic in his admiration of Oriental customs and costumes, and seeks the society of the natives, especially the mountaineers.

October 1*st*.—On Sunday I drove to the church of New Tiflis, a plain and unpretending building, lately erected by the Russian government. The church was very empty, perhaps in consequence of the bad weather, for a large portion of the congregation live on the other side of the river. Mr. Dittrich's manner is very impressive, and his silver locks and benevolent countenance heighten the effect of his eloquence. The service was admirably performed; and the voices of the young children, blending in the psalm with the deep bass of the men, produced a pleasing harmony.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Departure for Kakheti—Markobi—Telav—Georgian Prince—Seclusion of the Women—Forest Scenery—Cossack Pickets—Vintage—Wine of Kakheti—Intemperance of the Georgians—Signak.

As it still wanted some weeks to the arrival of the Emperor, I made a short excursion into the province of Kakheti, the vineyard of Georgia, which, as the learned pretend, is the native country of the vine. My companion for the first few days was a German wine-merchant, in treaty for the produce of the vineyards. I travelled in light marching order, with a single servant and a Cossack to be my guide and guard. A small valise tied behind my servant's saddle carried all I wanted. We halted for the first night at the Cossack station of Markobi,—a dreary spot as one would wish to see. The broken panes admitted the wind so freely that our candles

were several times extinguished, and the evening felt quite wintry.

October 2nd.—Our next night's quarters were more comfortable; and we cared not for the storm which howled without, while seated by a blazing fire, the first that I had seen for many a month. Our host was a young Georgian prince, whose rude dwelling occupied one corner of the ruinous castle of Telav, the last stronghold of the gallant but ill-fated Heraclius, last but one of the monarchs of Georgia. Nothing could be more primitive than the architecture of his house: the room in which we sat was scarcely twelve feet square, and furnished only with a bench and table; the walls were made of trunks of trees cemented with mortar, and were scarcely proof against the rain, which fell in torrents. Though in name a prince, our host was scarcely above the labouring class in station or intelligence: he was the owner of a vineyard, by the produce of which he lived, and in which he worked himself, together with his servants.

The women of his household were as carefully secluded from our sight as in any part of Persia; and whenever they appeared for a moment outside the door, they were closely muffled in their linen sheets. Our host was hospitable to the extent of his means; and after the long day's exercise we were not inclined to quarrel with his homely fare, especially as it was washed down by very palatable wine.

The rain did not set in till we had nearly reached Telav, and our ride was highly enjoyable. The country was beautifully wooded with every variety of forest-tree, and the broad glades of springy turf, almost arched over by lofty branches, opened at times upon wide tracts of park-like scenery. A few small villages lay at a distance from the road; and on the most commanding hills were seen the crumbling towers of many an ancient keep, whose walls of solid masonry had been rent asunder by the giant ivy. These were the castles of the feudal princes of Georgia, a

brave but lawless race, now quite extinct. The neighbourhood of the Lesghis, the fiercest of the mountain-tribes, renders this road unsafe; and Cossack pickets are stationed by the road-side at intervals of several miles. From each of these I took a horseman to guide me to the next. We passed a village where the grenadiers of Georgia have their winter quarters, and then commenced a long ascent, so slippery that our horses could hardly keep their legs. From the summit we overlooked the vale of Kakheti, and the serpentine course of the Alazan, which washes the base of the mountains of Daghistan. Telav was concealed among the trees. The rain, which had long threatened, now began to fall: we hastened our pace, and, as the evening closed in, we entered the town in the midst of a pitiless storm. It is a wretched place, but the situation is happily chosen.

It was the season of the vintage when I reached Telav, but the uninterrupted rain had put a stop to their labours; I therefore was

prevented witnessing the process of making the wine, which I am told is simple in the extreme. My travelling companion hoped by adopting a more improved method to produce a wine fit to be classed with generous Burgundy. On one or two estates, where more than ordinary pains are taken, the superior flavour of the wine shows that it is capable of great improvement. I have tasted some which had been several years in bottle, and thought it excellent. It is a full-bodied wine, and of a pleasant flavour, when it has not acquired a taste of naphtha from the skin.

The Georgians have the reputation of being the greatest drinkers in the world: the daily allowance, without which the labourer will not work, is four bottles; and the higher classes generally exceed this quantity: on grand occasions the consumption is incredible.

October 5th.—Having taken leave of my kind host, who pressed me to return by the way of Telav, I bade adieu to my companion, and resumed my wanderings. The early

morning was fine, and as the mists cleared away from the bed of the Alazan, we perceived the opposite mountains covered with fresh snow. The river, swollen with the late rains, was now impassable, otherwise I might have been tempted to explore the country of the Lesghis. My hopes of a fine day soon proved delusive: the clouds again began to lower, and the rain fell thick and fast. At times the sky would break for a few moments, enough to show me how beautiful the scenery would be were the weather fine. We passed through many a pretty village, with its high pointed roofs and broad verandas. Each house stood singly in its own domain, upon a sloping bank which faced the south: a few tall groups of oak and ash grew near the river-side, while rich vineyards covered the whole face of the hills. The scene was quite alive, in spite of the bad weather: groups of women were collected beneath the shelter of their porticoes; and numerous waggons, drawn by four or six buffaloes and oxen, were carrying the new-

made wine to Tiflis. Instead of casks, the skins of buffalo are used in Georgia for preserving wine. They are turned inside out, and smeared with naphtha, but they still retain the form of the animal; and as the wine rolls with the swaying of the waggon, the legs and tails are set in motion, and look as if life were not quite extinct.

The road, shut in on either side by high vineyards, was almost impassable. Our horses sank at every step above their fetlocks, and my Cossack was soon unable to proceed. My little Arab, too, accustomed to the deserts of his native country, plunged and plunged until he became exhausted; and as the rain still fell, I bore up for an isolated Cossack station, midway between Telav and Signak. At night the clouds rolled away, and a cold wind from the east blew over the Lesghian mountains with a biting keenness. But the next morning was again wet and cheerless, and not a gleam of sunshine burst through the cold grey sky. I took a circuit through the fields

to avoid the road, which was cut up by the heavy waggons, but did not mend my case. I counted in one field which I crossed no less than twelve yoke of oxen and buffaloes attached to one single plough. On every yoke sat an urchin urging the poor animals on by cries and blows. At length we quitted the valley, and, winding round the base of a hill, on the summit of which stood Signak, we entered the town shortly after noon. I despatched my Cossack to the house of the governor of the district to request that a quarter might be assigned to me. The worthy man kindly invited me to take up my lodging at his house, and I was ushered into the most comfortable suite of rooms that I had seen for a long time. Female taste was evident in every arrangement, but the fair lady of the mansion was not visible. My host was a Russian, and spoke no other language, nor was an interpreter to be found in Signak. However, by dumb show, eked out by a few words of Russian which I had picked up, we

got on amazingly well together; and, after a very welcome supper, I was glad to avail myself of the unusual luxury of a bed.

Shortly before sunset the weather had, as usual, mended; and from the balcony I enjoyed a most magnificent view of the vale of Kakheti. Countless villages lay half-concealed among the vineyards which clothed the mountain side; and the Alazan, now swollen and discoloured, swept in graceful bends through the centre of the valley. The noble chain of Lesghian Mountains, half-veiled in snow, was tinged with the most brilliant pink, which quickly melted away, and was succeeded by a grey, so cold that it drove me from the balcony to the comforts of a blazing hearth.

CHAPTER XIX.

Rencontre with the Nijni-Novogorod Dragoons—Bivouac—Colonel Besobrasoff—Brass Band—Wet March—Circassian Prince—"Leghian Dance"—German Colony of Marienfeld—Officers of the Dragoons—Polish Count—Arrival at Tiflis.

It was with regret that I quitted Signak on the following morning; for fine weather seemed to have set in, and the road by which I was now to return to Tiflis was dreary and uninteresting. However, the badness of the roads deterred me from returning by the way I came; and, leaving the rich vegetation of Kakheti behind me, I crossed an uncultivated plain for nearly twenty miles. On reaching the bank of the river Jora I found it so much swollen, that it was not without danger that we forded it. On the opposite bank, concealed from us by a narrow belt of wood which bordered the stream, lay the bivouac of the "Nijni-Novo-

gorod" dragoons, on their way to Tiflis, to share in the field-day which was to take place on the Emperor's arrival. I had heard much of the hospitality of the colonel; so I rode straight up to his tent, and, on announcing my name, was welcomed with every kindness. Colonel Besobrasoff is a tall, handsome man, of about five-and-thirty; he was for many years aide-de-camp to the Grand Duke Constantine, and on the death of that prince he was attached to the imperial staff. He had since served with distinction on the Kouban, in command of a regiment of Cossacks, and had lately been promoted to the colonelcy of these dragoons, the only corps of regular cavalry in the army of the Caucasus.

It happened to be the colonel's "name-day," or festival of his patron saint, when I arrived, and a long table, rudely constructed of rough planks, was covered with the debris of an abundant dinner, and a long array of empty champagne-bottles. Their early meal was over, but the remnants soon furnished a

repast with which no traveller could find fault. Besobrasoff pressed me to spend the evening with them, and perform the next day's march in company, to which I gladly acceded. After indulging in the Russian fashion of a short siesta, we made the tour of the bivouac, and then returned to supper. There an unexpected pleasure awaited me: the brass band suddenly struck up one of our old favourite Rifle quick-steps, which brought to my mind a thousand pleasing recollections. How little I thought, when last I heard that march re-echoed by the forests of North America, that the next time I listened to it would be at the foot of the Caucasus! I never felt the power of music so deeply; and almost forgot, in the scenes which the sound recalled, that I was a solitary wanderer.

The night was dark and threatening. Numerous watch-fires threw a fitful glare upon long piles of arms, and faintly showed the lines of horses at their pickets. The baggage-waggons were commencing their night-march,

and the camp resounded with the wild cries of their drivers. Within a hundred yards of us the river bounded in a series of low cascades along its rocky bed, heard but not seen. Our party was a motley group of every nation, worthy of Wallenstein's camp: Russians, Poles, Germans, Spaniards, and Georgians, were crowded together round the festive board, and the confusion of tongues was worse than Babel. Before our meal was finished, the rain began to fall in few but heavy drops, and soon the storm burst over us with distant peals of thunder. I know not where the officers found shelter, for I saw no houses near, and the only tent was occupied by the colonel and myself. The troopers were exposed to all the inclemency of the weather; and when at daylight the trumpets sounded to horse, the poor fellows looked half drowned. The morning was wet and cheerless, and our path led across barren downs, over which the wind blew in partial gusts. The band struck up a lively march, and after-

wards each troop in succession sang some national hymn, which served to beguile the way. The sight to me was novel and interesting; and, as the long lines of horsemen wound slowly among the hills, or, dismounting, led their horses down some steep ravine, the scene was very striking. I turned to my Persian servant, and asked him what he thought of the European cavalry. He answered that they looked very well, but that he thought a few Persian "sawari," or irregular horse, might play round them without much danger. I fully agreed with him: the Russian horses brought from beyond the Don are large and heavy, and show very little blood. They are but ill calculated for the mountain warfare of Daghistan, and I was told that most of the expeditions of the dragoons are performed on foot. Besobrasoff himself had some good-looking horses—most of them from the south of Russia. His emoluments as colonel of this regiment are considerable, but his expenses must also be very large; for

he lives in first-rate style, keeping open table for the officers under his command, who all appeared much attached to him. A young Circassian prince, who always accompanied him, excited my admiration by his skilful and daring horsemanship, which I have rarely, if ever, seen surpassed. He was never still for a moment, urging his horse at full speed over the most rugged ground, and playing every sort of antic.

Midway we halted for breakfast, allowing the regiment to precede us. A glass of good Kakheti was no bad substitute for tea. About noon we reached the German colony of Marienfeld, one of the most thriving of the number. Before entering the colony we passed through a Georgian village, and the band struck up the "Lesghian," a lively tune, which set all the groups upon the house-tops in instant motion,—stamping with their feet and snapping their fingers. One troop, commanded by a Georgian prince, received orders to take up their quarters here, while

the remainder were billeted among the colonists. A comfortable farm-house had been prepared for the colonel's accommodation; and there I also stopped, having promised to accompany him during the remainder of the march.

We halted the following day in our good quarters, for the men had been for several successive days exposed to the rain, and their accoutrements were completely soaked. To do them justice, they behaved admirably; and, during the two days that they were billeted in Marienfeld, I did not hear a single complaint of their conduct. In making the tour of their billets one evening with Besobrasoff, we found one man undergoing punishment for stealing a bunch of grapes from the garden of a colonist; and this one example was sufficient.

Now that we had left the wooded country behind us, the weather became dry and warm; for in this climate wherever there is forest the rain is often uninterrupted for months toge-

ther. The morning quickly passed away in visiting the billets and looking at the horses; and at twelve our party assembled to dinner. In spite of difference of nations the utmost harmony and good fellowship appeared to prevail among them. A Spaniard was the life of the party—quizzing and quizzed by every one, and ready with a joke in any language. He had been "destitué," and had only just advanced to the rank of cornet. I like the Russian custom (to which I have before alluded) of calling every one by his patronymic; though it used often to puzzle me, who only knew the surname of my acquaintances. In the dragoons were several young Poles of high family, condemned to serve in the ranks on account of having borne arms in the outbreak of 1830. Thanks to the kindness of the colonel, their situation was less hard than that of many of their unfortunate countrymen. One of them, the Count Plater, was a peculiarly agreeable, gentlemanlike young man, and a great fa-

vourite with the officers, with whom he constantly associated. His mother, I am told, was one of the most beautiful and accomplished women in Poland. There were some very tolerable specimens of the Dugald Dalgetty school among the foreign officers, whose habits and opinions seemed to have been picked up from every nation in the course of their various wanderings. In a party so constituted there could not fail to be found much amusement and instruction.

Most of the officers appeared to be men of little or no private fortune; and the pay of the Russian officers below the rank of colonel, though in the army of the Caucasus it amounts to double that of the other troops of the line, is not sufficient to enable them to support the character of gentlemen. Many of them could not even afford to have a horse of their own, and used to ride those belonging to their troop. As the colonel kept open table at all times, they were of course exempt from all mess expenses; but, as far as I could learn,

this was not incumbent upon him, though it is generally expected. The uniform of the dragoons is in bad taste: over a dark-green jacket they wear red accoutrements, and their shakos are covered with curly lambskin, in imitation of the bearskin caps of the grenadiers. On the breast of the jacket is fixed the Circassian cartouche-box; and the Circassian "shashka," or sabre, without a guard, is slung across the shoulder. Their horses are not bitted like regular cavalry, but ridden merely with the bridoon. The quantity of waggons which accompanied their march was quite astounding; for they carried with them both barley and hay sufficient for their consumption while away from their cantonments. In Tiflis forage is expensive, whereas, in "Kara Agatch," the quarters of the regiment, as much hay as can be consumed is to be had for the mere trouble of cutting it.

Only four squadrons were on their march to Tiflis; the regiment consists of seven, but one always remains in quarters, and two

others had been unexpectedly summoned to the shores of the Caspian at Bakoo, where disturbances had broken out. The squadrons that I was with were very strong; their horses were nearly all brown-bay, and the band, which consisted of about four-and-twenty, were mounted on greys. When we resumed our march, on the morning of the 10th, the weather was fine; the great coats were doffed, and both men and officers had availed themselves of our halt to exchange their well-worn jackets.

We halted midway to give the horses a feed of corn, and likewise to refresh ourselves, and at about three in the afternoon we reached the suburbs of Tiflis. The view of the town from this approach was very beautiful: the left bank of the river rises perpendicularly from the water to the height of eighty or ninety feet, and is surmounted by a fort, which crowns the very brow of the cliff. The opposite bank slopes gradually towards the hills, which, at this point, advance within

half a mile of the Kour, and is covered with successive terraces of vineyards, interspersed with groups of trees and scattered houses. On a spur of the mountain the massive ruins of the old Turkish castle, scarcely distinguishable from the rocks on which they stand, look doubly grand, contrasted with the flimsy buildings of the modern town. The river, deep and rapid, sweeps with a graceful bend round the base of the Russian citadel, and then, no longer confined within such narrow limits, flows noiselessly over a broad and level bed. The Kour is not navigable—a great drawback to the commerce of Tiflis—which would otherwise have an easy communication with the Caspian, and the rich Persian provinces which line its southern shore.

Passing through the Georgian suburb, and the colony of New Tiflis, below which we saw the long lines of the artillery encampment, we rode to the German colony of Alexandersdorf, where billets had been allotted to the dragoons. Here I found one of my grooms

with a fresh horse for me; and, sending home my little Arab, I remained to dine with Besobrasoff. It was growing dark when I mounted to return to Tiflis, but I was not long accomplishing the distance. My Turcoman was in splendid condition after his long rest, and excited great admiration among the dragoons, by the side of whose heavy cross-made horses he did indeed look thorough-bred.

CHAPTER XX.

Prince Souvoroff—German Professor—Soirée at the Palace—Latin Conversation — Grand Parade—Baroness Hahn—Russian Customs — Petersburg Guardsmen — Missionary Labours among the Armenians—Princess Madatoff.

October 11*th.*—I passed my whole morning with Souvoroff, who is a first-rate musician, and spends half the day at the pianoforte: he played and sang a number of pretty national airs, and when we were tired of music we talked over the old days of Switzerland. I have since heard that Russians are no longer permitted to send their sons to Hofwyl; as some of these young men have returned to Russia enthusiastic admirers of a republic, or, at least, of free institutions. Souvoroff's friend, the Professor, was with us, an open-hearted, good-humoured fellow. To an Englishman, who has not mixed in the society of

foreigners, the ready frankness of the Germans is strange, and, at first, rather repulsive: they will speak to comparative strangers, without any hesitation, on subjects upon which the Englishman is reserved, even with his most intimate friends; but, after some acquaintance, it is impossible not to be pleased with their candour and enthusiasm. At seven we all adjourned to the palace, this being one of the evenings when the Baroness received visitors. The General was absent, having proceeded to the shores of the Black Sea to receive the Emperor. We had a little music, but I cannot say much for the singing. The Professor entered into a long Latin conversation with a Russian doctor; and it amused me to hear the most trivial remarks about the weather, and the gossip of the day, uttered in a language which I had always reverenced as sacred to the highest works of literature. I next went to Monsieur Rodofinikin's, in the hope of finding letters from England. They were alone, with the exception of the Baroness

Hahn, wife of the senator, whom I had met at the governor-general's levee: she is a native of Baden-Baden, and a remarkably agreeable, well-informed woman. Madame Rodofinikin is also a German, and I found her invariably pleasant and good-humoured.

October 12*th.*—I received a formal invitation to attend a grand parade in the Madatoff-square, preparatory to the arrival of the Emperor. The limited space prevented their performing any evolutions beyond marching past. There were only four battalions of infantry, four squadrons of cavalry, and thirty-two pieces of artillery; the army of Georgia being dispersed throughout a vast extent of country, and the larger portion being stationed on the shores of the Black Sea and the Caspian. There was a large proportion of officers of the superior ranks, and, at least, half-a-score of general officers. It was merely a rehearsal, and nobody appeared to understand his peculiar business.

I dined at Rodofinikin's; and it being the

governor-general's fête-day, I looked in at the palace, to pay the customary compliments to the Baroness. The saloon was crowded, and the circle of ladies was larger, and, if possible, more formal than on any former occasion. One young married lady, lately arrived from Petersburg, was rather lively and amusing; and the prim-looking Georgians, with their ungainly dress and painted faces, afforded us ample scope for a little good-natured quizzing. Very few of the Georgian women enter into the society of the Europeans, still fewer have adopted their costume. Among themselves they have a good deal of society, but as they rarely speak any other than their native language, I did not attempt to procure an introduction, especially as I was sure to see every one who had any pretension to noble blood—a class comprising a very large proportion of the ladies of Tiflis—at the ball which was to be given to the Emperor on his arrival at the capital.

October 13*th.*—I called this morning with

Rodofinikin upon the Baron Hahn. The Baron was unwell and confined to his room, but we paid the Baroness a long and pleasant visit. It was a welcome sight to me to see the table spread with the latest French and German publications, and the Baroness pointed out to me several English periodicals — the Quarterly, and Blackwood, and the Asiatic Journal,—which she kindly offered to send to my house. I cannot say that I profited much by her offer, for every moment of my stay was occupied; and whenever I had a leisure hour I devoted it to the study of Russian, under one of the professors of the Gymnasium. I was obliged to shorten my visit, being engaged to dine with General Valkhovsky at two. In this country, husbands are so old-fashioned as to sit next their wives at dinner: usually the whole family occupy one side of the table, and the strangers are seated opposite. The other day I was about to place myself, as a matter of course, next to the lady of the house, when the husband civilly

requested me to take my seat opposite, as he always sat next his wife himself. There is something exceedingly disagreeable to me in being turned adrift, without anything to do, just at the hour when, in England, I should be bending my steps homewards to dress for dinner. I did not object to the early hours in the United States, because, in such towns as New York and Philadelphia, there was no lack of amusement for the evening: nor would it so much matter anywhere, to a man who had all his books and comforts about him; but to a traveller who cannot—I answer for myself at least—settle down to his book in a strange place as he would in his own house, it is very tedious to find himself, at six o'clock, thrown upon the wide world. The evenings, too, are becoming cold, and the comfortless stove in my room is as bad a substitute for a cheerful, blazing hearth, as the straight-backed wooden chair is for my own comfortable "Douro."

October 14*th*. — After breakfast Souvoroff

and I called upon Colonel Catinin and Count Vasilchikoff, two aides-de-camp of the Emperor. We found them engaged in the serious occupation of the toilet, and I must confess that I have never seen more luxury displayed in that department than by these Petersburg Guardsmen. Their dressing-cases, of English manufacture, were fitted with jug and basin of solid silver, and their dressing-gowns almost shamed me who had but just arrived from the land of silks and Kashmeres. They are both gentleman-like, agreeable men, more French than Russian in manner.

At noon I galloped out to Alexandersdorf, and found the dragoons exercising on foot. They formed a small but compact battalion, and did not march amiss. A fresh batch of horses had just arrived from beyond the Don, and they were trotted out, one by one, to be examined by the veterinary surgeon. I cannot help thinking that, in their own province of Karabagh, close to the cantonments of the dragoons, the Russians might find a more

useful description of horses. I dined with Besobrasoff, and on my way home I called upon Mr. Dittrich, at his parsonage. He was originally sent to this country about sixteen years ago, by the Missionary Society of Basle, to preach the gospel among the Mahommedans; but, on seeing the gross ignorance of the Armenians, he and his companions turned their attention towards the improvement of a nation which had a greater claim upon their labours, and seemed more likely to repay them. He made himself master of their language, and, in spite of great difficulties thrown in his way by the Church of Etchmiadzin, he effected considerable good; but his present appointment has entirely removed him from his former sphere of action. He is an agreeable, well-informed man, with a mild, pleasing manner; but I fear his health will oblige him to quit Georgia, and seek some less trying climate.

In the evening I drove to the Baroness Hahn's, where I met the Rodofinikins and

the Professor. As the latter speaks very little French, the conversation was entirely German. The literature of the present day was the principal subject of discussion, and I was surprised to find the Baroness so well acquainted with our best authors. An elderly lady, to my astonishment, addressed me in very good English: it was the Princess Madatoff, widow of a general officer in the Russian service, who acquired a large property in the Mussulman province of Karabagh, in a somewhat suspicious manner*. She now resides in that province, but has been reduced to poverty by the intrigues of her husband's relations. She was one of the favourite attendants of the Empress Elizabeth, and is evidently a woman of great talent. I returned home on foot, amid torrents of rain, which had driven even the droshkies to seek shelter.

* See the very clever pamphlet on the Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East.

CHAPTER XXI.

Wet Sunday—Dinner at Baron Hahn's—Russian Equipages —Suspicion of the Russian Authorities—A Brother Englishman—War with the Circassians—Attack of Fever and Ague —Arrival of the Emperor—Heir-Apparent of Persia.

October 15th.—By some fatality, Sunday, at Tiflis, is always a wet day, and the road to the colony was almost impassable this morning. The droshkies are very convenient in fine weather, but in bad, what with the rain and mud, it were almost as well to walk, but for the honour of the thing. It is amusing to see the chariot race which takes place when my servant calls a droshky. There is a stand at the opposite side of the square, and the two or three nearest invariably have a race up to my door.

After church I remained at home till five, when I dressed and drove to Baron Hahn's, who dines at a rational hour. Our host

was still confined to his room, and could not join us at dinner, but our little party was quite delightful. We were not more than eight, and the conversation was general. The society of gentlemanlike and well-educated foreigners is, to my taste, peculiarly agreeable. They are generally men who have travelled much, and to the purpose; and, if not themselves literary men, are well acquainted with the literature, at least, of their own country. Their conversation embraces a far wider range of subjects than that usually heard at an English table, where a stranger will frequently find himself lost in topics of mere local interest. After dinner I went to the Baron's room and sat with him for an hour: he is an agreeable, highly-educated man, who has seen much of foreign countries, while holding diplomatic situations at some of the Courts of Italy and Germany. He has also visited England, and understands English, although he does not speak it. He is a Courlander by birth, and studied at the

university of Heidelberg, of which he has brought away a slight memento in the shape of a sabre cut across the forehead. Count Plater, whom I have mentioned as serving in the ranks of the dragoons, joined our party in the evening.

October 16*th*.—I made my breakfast this morning off a French roll and a delicious melon from Erivan—a fruit justly considered a great delicacy—and which was sent me by the General: I have tasted no melon equal to it in Persia. Afterwards I took a canter over the hills, and scrambled among the ruins of the old castle. I am stared at when I ride out; for a horseman is an unusual sight in Tiflis, where every one drives his droshky, or takes an airing in his carriage. It is derogatory to a man of any rank to be seen with less than four horses, however light his carriage may be, but beyond the mere number etiquette requires nothing: they may be the veriest rips in existence, but provided there be four of them, and a postilion, his highness

the Prince or his excellency the General is quite *comme il faut.* I have seen many a carriage in Tiflis, with its four horses, for the whole of which I should have been sorry to give fifty guineas. The leaders are harnessed with very long traces, and the postilion sits upon the off-horse, which has a very awkward appearance. He, as well as the coachman, even in the best-appointed equipages, where the chasseur stands behind with his sword and cocked hat, wears a low-crowned hat, and a sort of blouze or smock-frock.

I was at the palace again this evening. I go there every two or three days, to show the authorities that I am after no mischief—for they still continue to suspect me. I heard by chance that the Governor-general had sent for one or two persons with whom I had had some conversation, in order to question them as to the subjects which I had spoken upon. This espionnage is far more discreditable to him than annoying to me.

Prince Hohenlohe was at the palace: he

had just quitted the Emperor at Akhaltsikhe, and come direct to Tiflis, while his Majesty intended visiting the fortress of Goomri, on the Turkish frontier, and proceeding thence to Erivan. The Prince drew a melancholy picture of the sufferings of the Emperor's suite, who could find time neither to eat nor to sleep, so rapid were his movements. The road which leads through the marshy forests of Mingrelia being axle deep in mud, the Emperor had become impatient, and, ordering the escort of Cossacks to dismount, had mounted with his own staff, and proceeded on horseback, riding on a Cossack-saddle, and wearing the black felt "yaponcha" of the natives. All his suite, and the poor old Baron Rosen, had to accompany him. I heard also that the Mingrelian fleas had not respected the person of the Emperor, and had driven him, on one occasion, to take refuge for the night in his carriage.

A message was sent to me to-day requesting to know my Christian name and that of

my father, in order that an invitation to the grand ball, intended to be given to the Emperor, might be duly made out. I am, I believe, the only Englishman in Georgia, excepting Baron Hahn's man Tom, who is a genuine cockney. I asked him one day from what part of England he came, and his answer was—"Why, Sir, I was born in Covent-Garden, but I have always lived in the Haymarket."

October 17th.—I met to-day a German gentleman who has the charge of the botanical gardens, and he gave me an interesting account of his being carried off by the Circassians, a few years ago, while crossing the Kabarda. His captors were hard pressed by the Cossacks, and, by letting himself slip over his horse's tail, he fortunately escaped unhurt in the fray. A very short time ago a Russian officer was carried off by the mountaineers: he was employed on a survey of the country, and the government had pledged itself for his safety, but the ransom demanded

for him was thought exorbitant, and he still remains a prisoner. The service against the Circassians is extremely harassing, and, although the accounts which we see weekly in the papers of the severe losses of the Russian troops are grossly exaggerated, yet they do lose many men by the sword as well as from sickness. This year an officer of the name of Bestujeff was killed in the attack of Adeler: he was their most popular novel writer, and commonly called the Walter Scott of Russia. By a strange coincidence their favourite poet, who has written much in imitation of Byron, was killed within a month or two of Bestujeff. He fell in a duel at the capital.

It is almost as difficult to obtain any correct information in Georgia, regarding the war in Circassia, as it is in England. I have spoken on the subject with many officers who have served against them, and can only learn that it is a complete guerilla warfare. All agree that these mountaineers are as brave as steel, and that there is no

prospect of a speedy termination to the contest.

October 20th.—I have been confined to my bed for the last two days, by a visit from my old enemy the intermittent fever, but the prescriptions of the Professor, and the possets of "Anna Andrevna," have quickly dislodged him. Last night there was a false alarm that the Emperor had arrived, and the town was in consequence illuminated, while all the bells struck up a merry peal. It arose from a mistake in firing the signal gun. It was not until four this afternoon that the imperial cortège entered the town. I had ridden to Rodofinikin's and taken up a position on the balcony to witness the scene. The Emperor, attended by Count Orloff, was seated in an open travelling carriage, drawn by eight horses; a guard of honour, composed of four-and-twenty Georgian princes, rode near the carriage, and their gay dresses were bespattered from head to foot. The streets were ancle deep in mud, and the weather during

the whole week had been stormy, with transient glimpses of sunshine. The Emperor wore a plain grey cloak and foraging cap, but I could scarcely distinguish his features from the balcony. No sooner had he descended from his carriage at the gate of the palace, than the rain began to fall in torrents, and the crowd which had assembled in the square dispersed to their homes.

The Emperor had visited Etchmiadzin for a few hours, and had continued his journey the same evening to Erivan. Here he met the young heir-apparent of Persia, the eldest son of the Shah, a boy of eight or nine. He was attended by the "Ameer-i-Nizam," or commander of the disciplined forces, and several other nobles. It had been intended that he should be present at the capital during the Emperor's stay, and a house had been fitted in the Oriental style for his reception; but he had been delayed at Tabreez, probably either by want of money for the preparations for his journey, or by awaiting a fortunate

hour for his departure. Besides this, he was too great a personage to be smuggled across the frontier, and had to perform the regulated quarantine on the banks of the Arras, so that he only reached Erivan a day or two before the Emperor, and it was decided that he should await his arrival in that town. The boy was of course too young to transact any business; but some discussion took place with the Ameer, not altogether of the most amicable nature. It was reported among the Persians that the little Prince had been charged to demand from the Emperor the restitution of the conquests made by Russia during the last war, a request *not very* likely to be complied with. The suite of the Prince, on their return to their country, expressed their astonishment "that the Emperor should wear a common yaponcha and sleep upon straw," so contrary to their ideas of the majesty of kings.

CHAPTER XXII.

Levee of the Emperor—Sudden change of Profession—Body-Guard of Georgian Princes—Dinner at Baron Hahn's—Emperor's Staff—Victor Hugo—Grand Review—Dinner at the Palace—Illuminations—English Tea-table.

October 21st.—LATE last night I received a note from the Governor-general, requesting that I would be at the palace at ten this morning, that he might present me to the Emperor. At nine his Majesty, according to his usual custom, attended mass at the cathedral, and afterwards drove to the Madatoff-square, where the battalion for duty was paraded, and all the officers drawn up to be presented. I could see all that passed from my window, and a pretty scene it was, for the square was thronged with people, and the balconies of the surrounding houses were crowded with Georgian ladies. The Emperor was

conspicuous among the group of general-officers, by his commanding height, and by the broad blue riband of St. Andrew.

At the hour named I repaired to the palace with Souvoroff, whose portly figure was encased in the richly-embroidered uniform of a "kammer yunker." Passing up the broad staircase between two rows of guards, we were admitted into the inner audience chamber, where the native princes of the Mussulman provinces, the governors of districts, and the heads of departments were assembled. Among the former were some strange figures, whose long flowing robes of Kashmeer were surmounted by general-officers' epaulettes, or confined by the broad riband of St. Stanislas or St. Catherine. There was every variety of costume: the mountain chiefs wore the Circassian dress; the Persian governors the black lambskin cap and close-fitting tunic, over which was thrown the Kashmeer cloak; while the Tatars, as the Russians call all the Turkish population of these provinces, were

wrapped in fur cloaks which covered their richly-embroidered jackets. The tight uniform of the Russian officers looked mean and ungraceful beside these Oriental dresses, nor did their national physiognomy contrast favourably with the handsome and expressive features of the natives of the East.

We were not long kept waiting: an inner door was thrown open and the Emperor entered, attended by the Governor-general, Count Orloff, General Adlerberg, and half a dozen aides-de-camp. The boast of the Russians—that among a thousand men you would not fail to recognise the Emperor—is scarcely exaggerated. His figure is commanding and his countenance striking; his height must be nearly six feet two, and his frame unites symmetry with strength; his smile is peculiarly fascinating, but the high forehead, the short and curved upper lip, and the expression of a rather small mouth, impart somewhat of sternness to his features when in repose. His naturally fair complexion is now bronzed by

exposure to a southern sun, but the forehead where the cap has sheltered it is white as marble. His blue eye is quick and expressive, and a small moustache adds to his soldier-like appearance. His Majesty wore the full dress of a general officer, distinguished only by his decorations. Passing round the circle, he addressed a few words to each individual as Baron Rosen presented him, and his manner towards the Asiatics was peculiarly gracious. An Armenian officer served as interpreter. It soon came to my turn to be presented. After remarking that I ought to have been at the cavalry review of Vosnesensk, the Emperor asked me several questions concerning the state of Persia, and mentioned his having seen the heir-apparent at Erivan. He then made some observations on the recent accession of Queen Victoria; on which subject he referred me to Count Orloff, and passed on to my neighbour Souvoroff. On his name being announced by the Governor-general, the Emperor immedi-

ately exclaimed that it did not please him to see the grandson of the Prince Souvoroff Italisky in other than a military uniform, whereupon my friend had to kiss hands and to become a soldier *nolens volens*. This struck me as rather an arbitrary mode of changing a man's profession, especially when he has for many years been following some other line, and has, perhaps, no inclination for a military life.

After completing the circle, the folding-doors were thrown open, and the Emperor passed into the outer audience chamber, where every one whose rank entitled him to the honour of an introduction was to be found. By far the larger number of these were Georgians and Armenians. Colonel Catinin introduced me to Count Orloff and General Adlerberg: the latter is the Emperor's principal aide-de-camp, and on all journeys fulfils the duties of Secretary of War. Count Orloff engaged me to call upon him in the morning to hear the news from

England, from whence he had recently returned, having been sent thither on a mission of congratulation to Her Majesty on her accession.

The duties of the interior of the palace are performed during the residence of the Emperor by a chosen body of young Georgian princes. Dressed in their splendid and becoming national costume, they fully uphold the character which the Georgians have acquired of being the handsomest nation in the world. Over a closely-fitting tunic of rich silk or brocade they wear a cloth dress with short sleeves, which reaches to the knee. Their loose Eastern trouser is of silk, and a black boot, fitting close to the leg confines it below the knee. A sword and pistols, richly inlaid, are fastened in their girdle, and on their head they wear a low lambskin cap.

In the evening I dined at Baron Hahn's; but there seems a fatality against my meeting him at his own table, for he had been unexpectedly summoned to dine at the

palace. Our party was, however, extremely pleasant. There were no ladies excepting the Baroness and the Princess Madatoff, and only four or five gentlemen, most of whom, though in the Russian service, were Germans by birth and education. Among them was young Count Nesselrode, the only son of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, a lively, agreeable young man: he is at present attached to the mission of Baron Hahn. There was not, I am sure, a moment's pause in the conversation, in spite of the attention due to an excellent dinner. I had to defend myself against a good-humoured attack upon some of our English customs, especially those of pledging each other during dinner, and of remaining at table after the departure of the ladies. The former I advocated with so much success, as productive of feelings of sociability, that it was immediately introduced amid much laughter. With regard to the latter, I should have been sorry to have proved equally successful. In the evening the Baron joined us,

with several officers of the Emperor's staff, all men of superior education and pleasing manners. The quality of personal appearance does not appear either to be overlooked in their selection: they were all tall, good-looking men, as many, at least, as I saw, and they are, I believe, almost without exception, officers of the guard. The situation of aide-de-camp to the Emperor of Russia is very different from a similar appointment at any other court; for surrounded, as he always is, with military men, his staff forms likewise his court, and the Emperor never ceases to be the general. They mostly belong to the first families of Russia, for it is the policy of the Emperor to encourage men of the highest rank to enter the service in some capacity, and by that means to prevent the formation of an independent aristocracy in the country, which might prove dangerous to the unlimited power of the crown. I was amused at the different opinions expressed with regard to Victor Hugo, whose works, together

with those of Jules Janin, and others of the French school,. were lying on the table. I happened to mention that I had been out of the way of meeting with them, and had not even read his celebrated "Nôtre Dame de Paris." Some of the party immediately exclaimed, "Where can you have been not to have read Victor Hugo's delightful writings?" While others, with a look of envy, asked me where I could possibly have been to have *escaped* from Victor Hugo. On the whole, I should say that the modern class of French novelists finds great favour in the eyes of the Russian public, who are not very fastidious in their ideas of morality.

October 22nd.—On the continent Sunday is always the day selected for grand "spectacles," and this morning had been fixed for the review of the troops. At eight I called upon Count Orloff; and as it was long since any of my letters from England had reached me, it was a pleasure to meet with one who had so lately returned from thence. At nine

all Tiflis was in motion towards the German colony, near which the review was to take place, and I rode out with Count Nesselrode soon after. The streets were thronged with carriages of every sort, which the poor horses could scarcely drag through the deep mud, which reached above their fetlocks. When we arrived at the ground the Emperor was already there, and we took up our station near the Baroness Hahn's carriage. The ground was worthy of a review on a larger scale, being an unbroken and uncultivated plain of many miles extent in every direction, and admirably adapted for the movements of cavalry and artillery. The meagreness of the military "spectacle" was, however, amply compensated by the beauty of the landscape. The deep and rapid Kour divided us from the city of Tiflis, whose tiers of white houses lined the opposite hills like the steps of a colossal amphitheatre. To the south the prospect was bounded by a sudden bend of the hills, which follow the bold sweep of the

river; but to the north, the eye, after tracing the winding course of the Kour through a narrow valley clothed with orchards and vineyards, rests on the noble peak of the distant Casbek.

The ground was so heavy from the late rains that, beyond marching past, no manœuvres were attempted. The troops assembled could not have amounted to more than three thousand five hundred men. The artillery appeared in good order, and the guns were well horsed, but I cannot speak to their efficiency either in firing or manœuvring. The Emperor, at all events, was pleased with them, and bestowed on the spot the decoration of St. Anne upon the chief of that department. The dragoons merely marched past at a walk and trot, for they are considered as irregular cavalry while serving in the Caucasus, and are not properly bitted so as to be able to exercise at a canter or gallop. The parade did not last long, and on returning to Tiflis I found an aide-de-camp in search

of me with an invitation to dine at the palace at four. At that hour I found a large party assembled in the saloon—about forty or five-and-forty in all—consisting of the principal Asiatic chiefs, the general officers and colonels of regiments, and some officers of the civil service. The Emperor soon entered, wearing the undress of a general officer. The new knight of St. Anne was introduced, and, according to form, the Emperor embraced him; but, as the general was a little round man, the scene was somewhat ludicrous. His Majesty asked me why I had not been at the review that morning, and, on my answering that I had been present, he expressed his regret that I had not joined him. "I wonder," he said, "that I did not distinguish your handsome uniform; but, indeed," he added, laughing, "place me before troops, and I have no longer eyes for anything else." The usual whets were handed round the circle: caviare, and anchovies, and brandy, and immediately afterwards dinner was an-

nounced. I remarked that the Russians of the old school adhered to the custom, while the trays passed untouched by the younger men. As I was moving towards the banqueting-chamber, in conversation with Besobrazoff, I met Count Orloff in search of me. He seated me between himself and Colonel Rauch, an officer in the Prussian service, who has accompanied the Emperor on his journeys for several years. On the other side of Colonel Rauch sat the Emperor, while on the right of the Governor-general, who occupied the head of the table, were seated several of the natives of highest rank. There was the Prince of Mingrelia, an old, grey-headed man, with a plain dark dress, relieved by a star of brilliants: next to him was "Aga Meer Futteh," the quondam "Mushtehed," or chief priest of Tabreez, a man of very indifferent repute, and who was mainly instrumental in yielding up Tabreez, without a blow, to the Russian advanced guard in the late war. Below the Mushtehed sat the "Shamkhal,"

or native Prince of Daghistan, with the Circassian vest, and the broad leather cap edged with fur. The dinner passed very pleasantly, and the conversation turned principally on the novel customs and the picturesque appearance of the Easterns, with which the Emperor seemed much pleased. As soon as the dinner was over, we moved into the saloon, and soon after the Emperor retired to his apartments. I drove to my own quarters, and throwing aside my uniform, sauntered along the streets to breathe the fresh air, and see the illuminations. By the uncertain light of a thousand trembling lamps, the groups of Georgian women, seated on their low balconies, were beautiful to see; and many a graceful form and laughing eye riveted my gaze as I passed by. Along the crest of the amphitheatre of hills beacons had been fixed, so high and distant that they looked like stars. The night was fine but cold; so seeing lights in the drawing-room at General Valkhovsky's, I joined the party assembled round

the tea-table. It was quite delightful to speak English again; and I did ample justice to sundry plates of buttered toast, brought, as I was assured, solely on my account.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Parade—Act of Justice—Grand Ball—Georgian Women—Dancing—Princess Katinka * * * *—Supper.

October 23*rd.*—ANOTHER review took place this morning in the square before my house. I remarked that one battalion marched past very indifferently, and, within an hour after the termination of the parade, I heard that the colonel had been superseded. It is the Emperor's custom, as each company passes before him, to signify his approval if they have done well; and the men answer in some such words as "We are glad that your Majesty is satisfied." This struck me as unsoldier-like. The infantry are drilled according to the French system of three ranks; but many alterations have been introduced into their tactics by the Emperor, who pointed them out to me,

entering quite into the minutiæ of drill, and inquiring in what respects our system differed.

After the parade had been dismissed a terrible act of justice was preformed: the officers were called to the front, and Prince Dadian, the colonel of the grenadiers of Georgia, the son-in-law of the Governor-general, and an aide-de-camp of the Emperor, was conducted into his Majesty's presence. I saw that all was not right, and walked towards the other end of the parade with Colonel Rauch. I did not hear what was said, but saw the military governor step forward, unbutton the prince's coat, and tear off his aiguillettes. His sword was taken from him, and within a few hours he was on his way to a distant fortress to await his trial by court-martial. It was so unexpected, that I am told several of his nearest relations were looking on from the balcony of his own house, without a suspicion of what was about to take place. I could scarcely believe my eyes, for I had

seen him the preceding day at the Emperor's table. A charge had been brought against him for employing large numbers of the men of his regiment in his own private concerns; and an aide-de-camp of the Emperor had been sent to the station of his corps to inquire into the truth of the statement: he had only returned the preceding night. I was very sorry for the poor Princess, who had only been married to him a twelvemonth. I have since heard that the military tribunal sentenced him to serve in the ranks, and that in despair he committed suicide.

This example, which proves that no amount of interest is able to screen the offender, has naturally alarmed the officers commanding the different regiments: for peculation is so general an offence, that there are few, if any, whose conduct would stand a close investigation. The Emperor spoke most kindly to the poor old Baron; and, by way of affording him some consolation, named his eldest son one of his aides-de-camp.

Since the Emperor's arrival in Tiflis, the number of petitions that have been presented amounts to upwards of two thousand; and if they should be read, they will probably unfold an extent of corruption and injustice for which his Majesty is not prepared, and which will implicate some of the highest officers in the country. An aide-de-camp stands at the palace gate, and receives every paper with his own hand.

October 24th.—Rodofinikin engaged me to dine with him yesterday, and to accompany him to the ball, which had been fixed for this the last evening of the Emperor's stay. I promised myself much amusement from so novel a scene. It was little after eight when we arrived, but the saloon and corridors were already thronged. The men were standing in groups in the middle of the room, or elbowing their way through the crowd, while the women were ranged in formal rows on benches placed against the walls. Beyond

the ball-room lay a long suite of rooms, terminating in a small octagonal boudoir, the recesses of which were occupied by couches of the most inviting luxury. I must confess that I was sadly disappointed in the beauty of the far-famed Georgian women; and yet I do not know what right I had to raise my expectations high. Their praises have been sung almost exclusively by the poets of the East; and the absence of mind, without which the most perfect features fail to charm the refined taste of an educated European, matters little to the sensual eye of an Asiatic. Their dress is also most unbecoming. A golden tiara, pressed low upon foreheads already somewhat deficient in elevation, is the universal ornament for the hair; while their gowns, too liberal in the display of their bosoms, conceal the foot and ancle, and hide the prettiest figure. Then, almost all, young as well as old, are painted, and their stained eyebrows impart a coarseness and unpleasing

boldness to the countenance. In short, if there be beauty, it is beauty of a low and unintellectual order. At some little distance, many a face struck me as very pretty, but, on a nearer inspection, there was always some fault, usually about the mouth. The Georgian costume is far more becoming to the men, who showed to great advantage, beside the Armenian merchant, with his sober garb. There was also a sprinkling of Turks and Persians; and had any European been transported thither, unconscious where he was, he might have fancied himself at a masquerade, so motley were the groups. The old Mushtehed was there, and, seizing both my hands in his, he overwhelmed me with questions regarding his native country. Were he to show himself there, I doubt whether the sanctity of his office would ensure the safety of his life.

At nine the Emperor arrived, and the ball commenced. His Majesty opened it in person, by walking a polonaise with a little

Georgian "Tzarevna," or Princess Royal, long past the bloom of youth. With great difficulty, and at the risk of leaving my pelisse in the press, I contrived to reach the circle where the Europeans were quadrilling. A few Georgians in European dress joined in the dance. This was succeeded by another polonaise; and the promenade was extended, far beyond hearing of the music, through the long suite of rooms. The mother and sisters of the Princess Dadian were present; and I felt quite sorry for the poor girls, whose assumed gaiety was sadly contradicted by their eyes still red with weeping. I was looking on, when the Emperor rallied me for not dancing, adding that, probably, my thoughts were wandering to the fair maidens of Persia. I, of course, denied the charge of blindness to the charms of the fair Georgians, and hastened to vindicate my character. Had his Majesty taxed me with allowing my thoughts to wander in another direction, he might, perhaps, have been nearer the mark.

After the quadrille was finished, some of the Georgians danced the "Lesghian," a monotonous and ungraceful dance. The Emperor did not remain long; and, when the room was become a little less crowded, a few couples stood up to waltz. My partner, the Princess Katinka *****, a pretty little Georgian, spoke French with ease, and her manner as well as her dress was European. Her sister, Madame Grebaidoff, was there, the widow of the unfortunate Russian ambassador who was murdered at Tehran a few years back, together with his whole suite, in consequence of having offended the religious prejudices of the Mahomedans. Their father is a General in the Russian service, and usually resides in Kakheti, where he has a very pretty villa. I regretted that they were not there when I passed through that province, as they receive European travellers with much hospitality. Etiquette forbids the lady to take more than one turn with the same gentleman; and there was a constant change

of partners. At a late hour, supper was served up in a very handsome style; and, as the Georgians were beginning to become uproarious, I beat a retreat, and drove home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Emperor quits Tiflis—The Imperial carriage is upset—Family Dinner—Parade of the Dragoons—Aga Meer Futteh—Princess Katinka * * * * *—Arab Mares—Preparations for departure—A Literary Lady—Comfortable Quarters—Farewell Visits—Dinner at Baron Hahn's.

October 24th.—EARLY this morning the Emperor quitted Tiflis on his way to "Novo Tcherkask," where he was to be met by the Czarovitch, who was to be installed as Hetman of the Cossacks. I felt half inclined to witness the ceremony, but soon discovered that it would be impossible for me to reach that place in time, as every horse along the road was required for the imperial cortège. Within a mile or two of the town, the carriage, in which were seated the Emperor and Count Orloff, was upset at a very dangerous descent, and had not a newly-erected post and rail been strong enough to bear the

weight, the whole must have been precipitated into a deep ravine. The Emperor was thrown upon his shoulder, but was able to mount the horse of one of the attendant Cossacks, and gallop on to the end of the stage. A fresh carriage was brought from Tiflis without delay, and the lost time was soon recovered. I rode out to examine the spot, and saw how narrow an escape it had been.

Tiflis appears quite deserted to-day. A few knots are seen at the corner of the streets, and the name of Dadian is in every one's mouth. The unfortunate Princess will, it is said, shortly follow him. Hers is indeed a pitiable case. The Emperor's rapid visit has left deep traces, like the passage of the thunderbolt; and, before long, it is supposed that vast changes will take place in every branch of the administration. It is expected that Baron Rosen will be immediately removed from the government of Georgia; and it was evident to all that the Emperor was far from pleased with what he witnessed.

No Czar had hitherto visited these distant provinces; and the governors, thinking themselves secure behind the screen of the Caucasus, had governed, or rather misgoverned, the country with impunity.

About noon I called upon Countess Simonich, and found Colonel Besobrazoff there. The Countess pressed us to remain and dine, which we did. We were the only guests, and the rest of the table was occupied by governesses and children of every size. To do them justice, they behaved very quietly. When I had seen the whole party seated to their rubber, I made my escape.

October 25th.—A strong northerly wind has at length dispersed the clouds which for the last three weeks have made the weather raw and chilly, and Mount Casbek is once more visible from my window. The increasing snow, which now clothes some of the lower ranges of the Caucasus, warns me that I must be on the wing. I shall only wait for the next mail from Persia, and then "to horse."

Taking advantage of the fineness of the day, I cantered out to Alexandersdorf, where Besobrazoff had invited a few of us to see his regiment manœuvre. After going through some cavalry evolutions, two-thirds dismounted, and throwing out a line of skirmishers, advanced against the little colony. I was in front of the line, but the sight of a ramrod, which struck the ground beside me, warned me to change my post. This mock assault was succeeded by another, anything but mock, upon a capital luncheon at Besobrazoff's quarters, and we returned towards Tiflis. On my way, I passed an unfinished house standing near the river side, joining to a garden laid out in Persian taste, with rows of poplar, and a light summer-house in the centre. This was the residence of the "Mushtehed;" so, having a vacant hour, I went to visit the old man. He receives a large pension from the Russian government for his services in the war between Russia and Persia, but it is evident that he dislikes his

new masters, and looks back with regret to his native land. It is indeed impossible for a Mahomedan to do otherwise than dislike the Russians, although motives of interest may induce him to favour their views. They make a point of offending in every way his prejudices, and of practising customs, while living in his country, which they know to be disgusting to him, and which a proper respect to the feelings of the inhabitants would prompt a stranger to abstain from.

I was ushered into a room, which reminded me of the toy-shops in the Soho Bazaar. In the centre stood a large table covered with every variety of ingenious but useless knick-knacks, and the shelves which lined the wall were filled with curious dresses, swords, helmets, models of machinery, and bottled reptiles. It was dangerous to move for fear of demolishing some of these fragile toys. No less than thirteen canaries, suspended in cages from the ceiling, were striving to outsing each other, and three large clocks, with

sundry loud-ticking watches, contributed to render conversation almost hopeless. The Mushtehed is an ingenious man, but the contents of his head appear to be as strangely jumbled as the furniture of his room. He has constructed an aqueduct to lead the water of the Kour to the level of his garden, and the German colonists depend upon him for the supply of that necessary article.

I afterwards spent half an hour with the worthy Mr. Dittrich. I regret that the distance and my want of leisure prevented my enjoying more of his society during my stay in Georgia. He gave me a most interesting narrative of the difficulties which he and his colleague, Count Zaremba, had experienced in their missionary labours among the Armenians, arising chiefly from the opposition of that stronghold of superstition, the church of Etchmiadzin. Count Zaremba, he told me, had been a soldier, and had lived a dissipated life, but he renounced his profession and his country, and devoted himself entirely

to the instruction of the Armenians. By birth he was a Pole. In the evening Souvoroff called for me, and we drove to Prince * * * *'s, the father of my pretty partner. The fair Katinka looked prettier than ever. She wore a short crimson cloak, edged with fur, reaching only to the knee; and the simple manner in which her hair was dressed became her well. Souvoroff played and sang, and we ended by clearing the room and waltzing.

October 26th.—In one of the Armenian caravanserais I saw the horses which the Seraskier Pasha of Erzeroom had sent as a present to the Emperor. They were a sorry lot; but two Arab mares who had been brought with them showed some breeding. I accompanied Souvoroff to hear the singers of the chapel, who are under his direction. Besides several pieces of sacred music they sang some national airs, both slow and lively. The effect was good, and I was surprised to hear how soft and flexible a language Russian is when sung. We dined at Baron Hahn's, where I

need not say we passed the evening pleasantly. When first I came to Tiflis I had been so long unaccustomed to society, that I felt a half disinclination to enter into it again; but now that the feeling had worn off, I looked forward with regret to the approaching day of my departure.

October 27th.—I heard the sound of distant trumpets as I was dressing this morning, and learnt that the dragoons had commenced their march back to Kakheti. Besobrazoff had kindly urged me to return with them, and accompany him on a hunting excursion in the forests of Karabagh, where every species of game abounds. I should have been glad to have done so, but the winter was now at hand, and a long journey was before me. I went into the bazaar to equip myself for the cold regions of Armenia, and selected a light Circassian yaponcha, and a huge pair of Russian boots lined with fur, and reaching far above my knee. These, together with a Turkish "bashlik," or head-piece, which

covers the cap, and fastening round the throat, protects the ears and neck, seemed sufficient to defy the utmost rigour of the winter, especially as my riding-coat was lined with the black Astracan lambskin. I ordered my servants to equip themselves in a similar manner, and made my arrangements for sending them on with my horses to the Turkish frontier, there to await my arrival, unless I should overtake them on the road. At the same time I forwarded all the baggage that I could dispense with direct to Tabreez, in order that I might travel through Asia Minor with all possible expedition.

October 28th.—Having sent off my people I gladly accepted an invitation from General Valkhovsky to take up my quarters for the few remaining days in his house. I had sent to the colony for my travelling servant, whose services I required until my departure, but Peter had emigrated to some other of the German colonies, where the post of schoolmaster had been offered to him. I dined

with the Count de la Rati Menton, and on my return Souvoroff proposed that we should visit Madame * * * *, a literary lady, who had done me the honour of desiring my acquaintance. Madame is a would-be "esprit fort;" and seems both theoretically and practically to consider the cares of the toilet as unworthy of a rational being. We found her in a dishabille between a bed-gown and a smock-frock, smoking a long chibouque, of which her husband, on his knees, was supporting the bowl. The conversation turned upon the lady's contributions to some unheard-of magazine, which the husband, in very broken French, gallantly assured me were full of genius, while the lady, with mock-modesty, cautioned me against believing a husband's fond partiality. Casting a reproachful look at Souvoroff, I seized my hat, and, taking French leave, sought refuge at Baron Hahn's. Returning home in the dark, for the lamps of Tiflis are few and far between, my arm was seized by some one

whom I could not distinguish, and, for a moment, the thought flashed upon my mind that it was a policeman. With the natural impulse of an Englishman I raised my fist, but fortunately for my friend Feh—for it was he who had come out to meet me—he discovered himself, otherwise he would infallibly have met the usual fate of watchmen, and measured his length upon the ground.

I found that "Anna Andrevna" had, with her usual kindness, been thoughtful of my comfort. A cheerful fire was blazing in my room, and, for a moment, I could have fancied myself in a country house in England. By the side of a comfortable bed, with curtains of dazzling whiteness, stood a small oak table, on which lay an old English Bible, and the room was hung around with English prints, in their old-fashioned black frames. I lay awake for a long time, indulging in recollections at once pleasing and painful; and I must confess that, at that moment, I would gladly have renounced all that I anticipated

of pleasure in my journey to be once more at home.

October 29th.—On driving to the German church I found the Baron and Baroness Hahn already there. It was the first time that they had heard Mr. Dittrich, for he had been absent for several months, and they had not been long in Georgia. They were much pleased with the impressive manner in which he performed the service. On quitting the church the Baron asked me to dine with them, but, as I was engaged, I volunteered to come on the morrow, the last day which I could allow myself in Tiflis. I dined at General Valkhovsky's, and met the reigning Prince of Abkhasia and his brother. He is nominally independent, but under the protection of Russia. General Valkhovsky's house and dinners are a very fair specimen of the style of living of the higher classes in Russia. There is a great deal of comfort without display or ostentation, and the table is always laid for more than the number of the family,

general invitations being intended to be accepted. The French custom is universally adopted of handing round all the dishes, and the dessert alone is placed upon the table. The order of the dishes varies a little from our notions, for the fish is brought round in the middle of the dinner, and the general finale is a rôti. What we call a second course rarely forms a part of their dinner. In old-fashioned houses supper is still eaten, but in the higher circles tea has generally superseded that sociable, but, alas! most indigestible meal.

On rising in the morning the Russians, like the Persians, always drink a cup of tea; and, as their dinner hour is early, breakfast is a meal unknown. This may be, and perhaps is, very wholesome and very rational, but it is not at all suited to my taste. On the whole, however, I think that Russian cookery, as far as I have had an opportunity of judging, is good; for, whatever the rest of the dinner may be, there is always a plain roast joint to

fall back upon. Besides the wine of Kakheti, there is the "Donskoy," a very palatable imitation of champagne, made, as its name imports, on the banks of the Don; but European wines, of course, are seldom met with in this remote province.

October 30th.—Even after a residence of a few weeks there is always much to be done on the last day: passports to be signed, orders for horses to be procured, and friends to be taken leave of. Fortunately, with the exception of the contents of a pair of saddle-bags, my baggage was not only packed but already halfway to the frontier; and my house having been provided for me by the government, there was no long bill to be presented at my departure. Having procured all the necessary papers, and ordered a post-waggon to be at General Valkhovsky's at eight the following morning, I made a round of farewell visits. It is not the fashion in Russia to shake hands with a lady: on daily meeting, a bow is the mode of salutation; but, on taking leave, you

bend and kiss the lady's hand, while she, at the same time, kisses your cheek. At last, all my arrangements were concluded, and I drove to Baron Hahn's to spend my last evening in Tiflis. There was no one there but Count Nesselrode and the Professor. The Baron gave me a most interesting description of his native country, Courland, where the manners and customs appear to differ greatly from those of the rest of the empire. Their "vie de château" seems to resemble the life in our country houses. Business summoned the Baron away early: he expressed a hope that if my love of wandering should some day lead me into Russia, I would visit them either at the capital or in Courland; and I trust that I may, at some future time, renew an acquaintance from which I have derived so much pleasure.

CHAPTER XXV.

Departure from Tiflis—Cossack Journey—Arrival at Goomri —Russian Commandant—New Fortress—Cross the Frontier—Armenian Officer—Haji Velli.

October 31st.—On the 31st I quitted Tiflis, after breakfast, in a post-waggon, twin-brother to that in which I was so jolted between Erivan and Etchmiadzin. Feh, who has made long journeys in these "tiliejkas," arranged the seat for me, by fastening slack ropes across, which acted in some measure as a spring. He and Souvoroff and the Professor accompanied me to the barrier, where an escort of Cossacks joined me, and, having taken leave of them, I rattled along at full gallop to the next station. Here unexpected difficulties began already to stare me in the face. I had brought two orders with me—

the one for post-horses, the other, in case there should be none, for a Cossack horse for my own riding, and a guide to accompany me. But here I learnt that neither were to be procured; and, moreover, that the river Khram was so swollen as not to be fordable. At length I made out, with some little difficulty, for I had no interpreter, that, by a detour of about thirty versts, I could cross the river at a point where it divided into several branches. I suspect that the other story of there being no horses was merely an imposition, for, when I offered a higher sum than the regular hire, they were immediately forthcoming. I started with my guide, and, just as evening was closing in, we forded the river; but the night was far advanced when we struck into the Goomri road. After that matters went smooth enough. Sometimes they gave me a good horse, sometimes a bad one, but on the whole vastly superior to the Persian chuppar horses. The Cossacks were invariably civil, though, naturally enough,

they did not approve of my riding beyond a gentle pace, the horses being their own property. Thanks to my good genius, I found in one of my saddle-bags a cold goose, a paper of little pies, and a loaf of white bread; while from the mouth of the other protruded the necks of a couple of bottles of "Kakheti." I soon found that we had bid adieu to summer. At sunset we quitted a station, the name of which I do not remember, and commenced the ascent of a steep and lofty mountain. The mist was so dense that, accustomed as I am to travelling at night, I could not for the life of me discern the path; and, to make matters worse, my horse, whether owing to some defect of vision or to the perversity of his disposition, would wander from the track. I sent my guide on before me, but even then the darkness was so great, that I could scarcely discern him at the length of my horse's neck. At last, when we were near the summit, the snow began to fall, and a piercing wind drove it in our faces and nearly

blinded us. I drew my yaponcha tighter round me, and when we reached the crest I dismounted, and ran down the steep descent, dragging my horse after me. We were not long in reaching the station, and I allowed myself half an hour's halt to make a cup of coffee. The Cossacks were quartered in one of the subterranean houses of the natives, which have at least the merit of warmth, if not of cleanliness. About twenty of them were crowded together in one small room. I found them civil and attentive. One old man, who had been with the Allied Armies, asked me if I had not heard of old Count Platoff, of whom he spoke with enthusiasm.

The country between Tiflis and Goomri is varied: much of it is abundantly wooded, but the trees are entirely stripped of their foliage. One species alone seemed to retain its verdure; but on a nearer approach I discovered it was a deception, produced by a species of moss or lichen, which covered every branch and hung in long festoons. The whole

line of road is thinly peopled, especially as you approach towards Goomri. I arrived at that place before daylight on the morning of the 2nd of November, not a little tired with my two nights' ride. I had to wait an hour at the Cossack guard-room, while I dispatched my guide to find out where my men had taken up their quarters. On his return, accompanied by one of my servants, I walked down to the caravanserai, where they had prepared a room for me; but having been led to expect that I should not be permitted to visit the new fort which was now in progress, I immediately mounted one of my own horses, and, attended by a groom, cantered to the hill on which the works were constructing. I merely took a rapid survey that I might not be balked of my intention, and returned half frozen to my caravanserai, where I made my toilet, and after eating a hearty breakfast, wrapped myself in my fur cloak, and in a few moments was fast asleep. On waking from my well-earned slumbers I found

an officer in waiting, whom the commandant had sent to request my company at dinner. I had, soon after my arrival, forwarded to him a letter of introduction from the Professor, who had been his guest for some days. At noon, the hour named, I rode up to the old fortress, which overlooks the town and fronts the site of the new castle, where Colonel Freund was quartered. I found him a rough old soldier, who had seen much service: by birth he is a German, but for five-and-thirty years he has been in the Russian service, and was severely wounded at the battle of Borodino. I have been told that he is not always very civil to Englishmen; but the Professor's letter, and my knowledge of his native language, opened the old German's heart, and he made every arrangement for facilitating my journey to the ruins of Anni. An officer was to accompany me on the morrow across the frontier to the village of "Madad Beg," the Turkish governor of the district in which the ruins stand, who would

furnish me with an escort, if he should consider one necessary.

Dinner was announced, and I seldom remember sitting down to a worse. The tablecloth and napkins were filthy enough to take away one's appetite; and, indeed, my host himself was as dirty an old fellow as I ever sat opposite to. I dropped my napkin on the floor, but an officious waiter replaced it by my side; I repeated the manœuvre, and planted my foot firmly upon it. An enormous tureen of "Tschi" was placed upon the table,—an old Sarmatian compound of cabbage and milk, which the true Russian delights in, but which, like the black broth of Sparta, none but a native can relish. Under a rough exterior, the old soldier concealed much feeling: for when I gave him an account of Prince Dadian's disgrace, and the poor little Princess's distress, he blubbered like a child. When I took my departure he kissed me on both cheeks,—a mark of affection which I could well have spared.

It was still early, and I crossed the deep ravine which divides the old from the new castle, to take a more accurate survey of the fortifications now erecting. The fortress of Goomri is intended to be a place of great strength and importance. Its situation on the frontier of Turkish Armenia will enable it to hold that country in check, and to serve as a base for offensive operations. During the last campaign between Russia and Turkey the want of a fortified post within her own frontier was much felt by Russia, whose convoys of provisions and ammunition were greatly exposed. The situation of the fortress is one of great strength—three sides being protected by natural defences; the fourth opens upon the plain, but art has been skilfully employed to supply the deficiencies of the ground. The stone of which Goomri is constructed is quarried on the very spot, and has the useful quality of being easily wrought, while exposure to the atmosphere afterwards hardens it. The timber required for the con-

struction of the fort, which is evidently intended to control them, is furnished by the Turks themselves,—the Pasha of Kars having contracted with the Russian Government to supply the necessary quantity from the wooded mountains of his Pashalik. The river Arpachai, a branch of the Arras, which flows at some distance from Goomri, and forms the boundary between the Russian and Turkish dominions, is shallow and always fordable, and does not in any way contribute to the strength of the fort. A quarantine station has lately been erected near the banks of the river, where the sanatory laws are more rigidly enforced than on the Persian frontier. It will be several years before the citadel of Goomri can be completed. In some parts the casemate barracks are already arched in; but, with the exception of that face which looks upon the plain, the lines of fortification as yet are only traced. During the Emperor's hasty visit at Goomri the rain fell without intermission; but, in spite of the bad weather,

his Majesty inspected minutely all the works, and bestowed marks of favour upon several of the engineer-officers.

It was at Goomri that the Seraskier Pasha of Erzeroum was deputed by the Sultan to meet the Emperor, and to congratulate him upon his visit to his Eastern provinces. I heard from my servants that on their way from Tiflis they had met with my old travelling companion Colonel Macintosh, whom I must have missed by travelling at night. He had been desirous of reaching Tiflis before the departure of the Emperor, but the Russian consul at Tabreez had refused him the necessary passports until it was too late.

November 3rd.—I was detained for some hours by the non-arrival of the officer who was to serve as my guide, and my patience being at length exhausted, I set out without him. I crossed the Arpachai, and threw my well-fingered Russian passport into the stream. It was a pleasure to me to set foot once more on Turkish soil, for I was heartily tired of the

vexatious forms to which the traveller is exposed in Russia. My servants, too, were in high spirits at the prospect of returning to their pipes and pillaus; and the horses, after their long rest, were fresh and playful. We followed the right bank of the Arpachai for some miles, and then struck across a wide, uncultivated plain towards an Armenian village, lying at the foot of a low range of hummocks. I heard a noise behind me, and, looking round, saw a horseman coming towards me at the top of his horse's speed. It was my guide, an Armenian officer in the service of Russia. He was formerly one of the most influential inhabitants of Kars; but, when the Russian army evacuated that pashalik, he saw himself obliged to accompany its march. He now holds the humble rank of lieutenant in the Russian army. He still retained the Oriental dress, and was a strikingly picturesque figure: his countenance was quick and expressive; and his gay scarlet jacket, covered with embroidery, became his light

and well-made figure. Over his shoulder was thrown a furred pelisse, also richly braided; and his loose Eastern trouser was met at the knee by a pair of crimson riding-boots of Russia leather. His little Koordish horse, as black as jet, was covered with rich trappings, and his bridle studded with small plates of silver. Checking his horse so suddenly as to throw him on his haunches, he drew a long breath, and looking down at the heaving flank of his little favourite, who stood bathed in sweat, he reproached me for having started without him, and given him such a chase. Deliberately filling his long chibouque, he seated himself by the road-side, ordered one of my grooms to walk his horse gently up and down, and despatched another to the village before us to order breakfast. I was by no means inclined to quarrel with this arrangement; and, when my friend had shaken the ashes out of his pipe, we mounted and rode gently on. My guide was evidently well known in this country, for the head man

of the village came out to meet him, and held his stirrup while he dismounted. He then ushered us into a dark room, at one end of which was an immense fire; and, drawing off our boots, he seated us in the post of honour. A tray was then brought in, on which were spread long cakes of bread; and a couple of fowls, which a ragged urchin was turning before the fire on a ramrod, were soon placed before us, to which we did ample justice without the aid of knife and fork.* We sent forward a horseman to the village of "Haji Velli," from which we were now only two hours distant, in order to apprize the Beg of our intended visit, and the sun had just sunk below the horizon when we ourselves arrived. A servant of the Beg's met us at the outskirts of the village; and, with many assurances of the pleasure with which his master would see

* The only fuel used throughout the greater part of Armenia consists of cakes of cow-dung, spread in the sun to dry. They are somewhat difficult to ignite, but when once they burn well they throw out a great heat.

us under his roof, he guided us among the subterranean houses of the villagers to one which reared its head a little higher above ground, but whose rough exterior did not give promise of the comfortable room where we found the Beg awaiting our arrival.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Turkish Hospitality—Snow-storm—Ruins of Anni—Scene of Desolation — Christian Churches — Koordish Shepherd—Caves.

MADAD BEG himself was absent, but a younger brother did the honours of the house. A low divan, raised about a foot from the floor, extended the whole length of the room on both sides, from the door to the fire-place, and the ingle-nooks were furnished with soft piles of cushions. The room was dimly lighted by two small papered windows, but the blazing hearth threw out a light more cheerful than the cold rays of a winter sun. Every one congregated round my guide to listen to his account of the late doings in Georgia, especially of the reception which the Emperor had given to their Lord the Seraskier Pasha; while I, too happy to be left alone, ensconced

myself in the opposite corner, and whiled away the hours till supper-time in bringing up my journal, which my late rapid movements had thrown into arrears.

It was very late when the servants appeared with preparations for the evening meal. My host, my guide, and I, seated ourselves round the tray, and the old major-domo presented us water to wash our hands. The supper consisted of a succession of somewhat savoury and very palatable dishes, in which sweets and acids were strangely mingled, and ended with a princely pillau, the pride of Eastern cookery. The word "Bismillah" (in the name of God) gave us the signal to fall to. Thin wheaten cakes served us in lieu of plates, and fingers performed the office of knives and forks. Once or twice my host tore off some dainty morsel and handed it to me; but, though one could well dispense with such marks of civility, they are intended as a compliment, and should be taken as such. Water was again handed round, and our host,

with the pious ejaculation of God be praised, ("Alhamdolillah,") rose from his seat, and we followed his example. Coffee and pipes were then produced, and one by one the Beg's guests returned to their homes.

A most luxurious bed was brought for me; and the Beg, after having ordered a trusty follower to accompany me on the morrow to the ruins of Anni, left me to my repose. When I awoke the snow was falling thick and fast, and a deep coat already covered the whole country round. My host pressed me to remain; but, if every day of snow is to confine me to the house, my journey through Armenia will indeed be slow. I therefore mounted, and pursued my way under the guidance of an old grey-bearded Turk. The hospitality of a Turkish magnate is a heavy tax upon the traveller, for every attendant expects a present from him when he quits the threshold, and it is almost impossible to satisfy them: in many houses, indeed, what they can levy from strangers is the only emolument the

servants receive. During a residence of nearly three years in the East I cannot remember receiving one single instance of genuine hospitality. Such may yet, perhaps, be found in the tents of the wandering tribes, but it has disappeared from towns and cities.

Fortune favoured me, for before I reached the little village of Tayen Alikh the weather partially cleared, although the day still remained dull and cloudy. Leaving my baggage and my best horses at the house prepared for my accommodation, I proceeded at once to Anni, attended by my guide and a single servant. The country over which we passed was beyond description dreary: the mountains, which would have relieved the monotony of the plain, were veiled in mist, and not a tree or shrub was to be seen. We passed one wretched village, surrounded by a few acres of tillage, but not a living soul was visible. An hour farther, and a sudden bend of the road brought us within sight of the ancient capital of Armenia, which, at that

distance, does not seem deserted. The massive towers and churches appear in perfect preservation; and the long line of wall which crowns the rocky heights masks the ruin which prevails within. The site of Anni has been most judiciously selected with a view to strength. The southern face is protected by a deep and precipitous ravine, at the bottom of which flows the rapid stream of the "Arpa Chai," here no longer fordable. Two other faces terminate in rocky and abrupt declivities; and the third, which alone is open to attack, is defended by a wall of massive masonry flanked by numerous towers.

We entered by the principal gate, which stands in the centre of this face. Over the gateway are some curiously sculptured figures. The walls and towers are built of irregular masses of stone cemented with mortar, but they are faced with well-hewn blocks of sandstone. The sacred symbol of Christianity is introduced in various places. Huge blocks of blood-red stone, let into the

masonry of the tower, form gigantic crosses, which have defied the hand of the destroying Moslem.

The only buildings which are now standing are the Christian churches, a Turkish mosque, several baths, and a palace, said to have been the residence of the last Armenian monarchs. All these display much splendour and architectural beauty, and the fretwork of some of the arches is very rich; but it is evident that the public buildings alone were on this massive scale, and that the private dwellings were always very humble. The hollows in the ground, and the mounds of loose stones scattered over the whole area of the city, would lead me to suppose that they were much of the same style as those now in use. Thoughout the whole of Armenia and Georgia I have remarked, that, while the villages are scarcely raised above the level of the ground, the churches are massive structures visible from a great distance. There are a vast number of inscriptions at Anni, some in Turkish, but the

greater part in Armenian. The churches are precisely of the same architecture with those of Etchmiadzin, and some of them are still in perfect preservation. In one, the walls are covered with rude paintings, in some of which I recognised subjects from the Scriptures; but the miracles of St. Gregory, and other saints of the Armenian calendar, occupied the large share. The Oriental Christians appear always to have had a fancy for building their churches in the most inaccessible situations; and of this there is a curious instance at Anni. On a narrow ledge of rock, washed on three sides by the Arpachai, stands a little chapel, accessible only by a steep and dangerous footpath. Tradition says that it was erected by the daughter of some old Armenian king, famous for her piety and beauty, who used to spend the greater portion of her days in this isolated spot.

As I rode among the mounds of stones, several covies of the rock partridge rose from

beneath my horse's feet, so seldom are they disturbed in the once crowded streets of the capital of Armenia. One solitary Koordish shepherd, with his white felt cloak, was standing beneath the shelter of a ruined porch, while his small flock of mountain goats were perched upon the crumbling arches of an adjoining bath. Shepherd and flock were both in keeping with the desolation of the surrounding scene, and would have furnished a subject worthy of Salvator's pencil. In one of the old roofless churches, a scanty fire, still smouldering among the blackened ruins of the fallen altar, marked his cheerless bivouac. My guide dismounting allowed his horse to stray within the gateway of the sacred pile, and, sheltered from the raw and piercing blast by the massive buttress of the vaulted aisle, vainly attempted to fan the dying embers to a flame.

The narrow valley or ravine which separates the city from the adjacent country appears to have been hollowed by the action

of water. Its perpendicular banks of limestone are curiously excavated into small apartments, rising in tiers above each other. Some of these are vaulted, and apparently accessible only by the means of ladders. Opinions are divided as to the use and origin of these cells, which some suppose to have been the dwellings of the living, others the receptacles of the dead. Whatever they may have been in former times, they are now the frequent haunt of lawless Koords, whose presence renders a visit to the ruins not unattended with danger.

The city of Anni was built in the early part of the sixth century, and continued for several hundred years to be the capital of Armenia. It fell several times into the hands of those fierce conquerors who during the middle ages overran the East, and experienced the most cruel treatment from them. The old historians inform us that, when Anni was captured by Alp Arslan, the slaughter was so great, that the streets were choked with

bodies, and the river crimsoned with the blood of the slain.

The feelings excited by the sight of this deserted city are very melancholy. The forsaken churches remind you that a powerful Christian nation here sank beneath the repeated attacks of the most barbarous tribes of Asia, the bitterest foes of civilization and Christianity. The very preservation of the buildings heightens the impression of loneness, and you involuntarily look around for signs of life. Amid the utter ruin of more remote antiquity, very different feelings are excited. The shapeless mounds of Babylon are like the skeleton; but the deserted yet still standing city resembles the corpse whose breath has fled, but which still retains the semblance of life.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Armenian Quarters — Signs of Winter—Town of Kars — Wretched Quarters—Russian Vice-Consul—Turkish Cavass —American Scene—Pass of Soghanloo Dagh—Pilgrims — Stable Scene.

EVENING was closing in, and, much against my will, I turned my horse's head towards the gates. We retraced our steps across the barren moor at a brisk pace, and I was not sorry to find my carpets spread beside a cheerful fire in an Armenian house or stable; for these subterranean dwellings serve as shelter both for man and beast. At the farther extremity a small portion is railed off, and sometimes raised a foot above the ground; but, with the exception of a piece of filthy carpet and a hearth, the accommodation of bipeds and quadrupeds is precisely similar. Travelling as I did with my own carpets, I

never quarrelled with these underground quarters, at least in winter. They were always warm, and I was able without stirring from my seat to see that my horses were properly groomed and fed after their long marches. There is indeed one serious drawback to one's comfort, and that is the quantity of vermin of every description, from which the utmost precaution will not entirely guard you; but these unpleasant bedfellows are to be found in the palace of the Pasha, as well as in the hovel of the peasant.

November 5th.—One week has transplanted us from summer to the depth of winter. A cutting wind drove the sleet against our faces as we rode across the fertile and well-cultivated plain of Kars; and the road was so slippery, that several times my baggage-horses fell. In such weather any country would look dreary; and the Armenian villages scattered over the plain did not contribute to make it less so. Unlike the villages of Persia, which usually can boast of gardens, or at

least of rows of willows along the margin of the stream which supplies them, these hamlets are hollowed in the face of some low mound, or sloping hill, and are only distinguishable by the blue wreaths of smoke arising from them. A march of five hours brought us to the town of Kars, the most wretched place that I have met with in my wanderings. Some years ago it was a thriving town, but the forcible removal of the Armenian population, at the close of the last war between Turkey and Russia, at once destroyed its trade, and robbed it of its wealthiest and most industrious inhabitants. The citadel is built of unhewn stone, and lines the face of a steep hill, at the foot of which the straggling town commences. A narrow street, up to my horses' knees in mud and melting snow, conducted me into the market-place, where a score of large yellow dogs were fiercely battling for the offal of the meat bazaar, while others lay gorged upon the heaps of rubbish thrown, according to Turkish

fashion, into the middle of the street. I halted in the market-place, while my servant made inquiries for the nearest caravanserai, but all were either full or heaps of ruins. At length, a well-dressed Armenian passed through the bazaar, and, seeing an European, addressed me in Russian, and civilly offered me the use of an empty house, which I was glad to accept, though little better than a barn. The room below was the most comfortable; but, as the narrow winding stair was an insuperable objection to turning the second floor into a stable, I was fain to resign it to my horses, and to endeavour, by means of a roaring fire, to counteract the chilling blasts which played through the unglazed window-frames and panelless doors. I was obliged to renounce the anticipated luxury of a Turkish bath, which would have been highly imprudent with such quarters to return to.

The owner of the house proved to be the Russian vice-consul; and he offered to send one of his "Cavasses" with me to Erzeroum,

which saved me the trouble of applying to the Pasha for one. These cavasses are servants of the Turkish government; but every European consul has one or two assigned to him as guards or couriers. It is not advisable to travel without one, as their attendance ensures you every accommodation both of quarters and horses. The agent of the British consul at Erzeroum, a Greek, soon found me out, and sent me over a feather-bed and a smoking pillau, which greatly contributed to the comfort of both my inner and outer man. I had at one time intended to make a day's halt at Kars, but nothing less than the certainty of meeting with an "Ayesha" would tempt me to prolong my stay.

November 6th.—It was late when I quitted Kars on my road to Erzeroum. My party was increased by the addition of the Vice-Consul's cavass, a gaunt, ungainly Turk, who rode a little Koordish Arab, half hidden by the awkward saddle of the country. He himself wore that bad imitation of the European

dress which the Turks are now substituting for their own graceful and becoming costume, and which betrays how much of their reputation for symmetry of form they owe to the loose flowing robes they now discard. An ill-made brown surtout, with large brass buttons, was fastened tight across his narrow chest, and on his head he wore the scarlet "Fez," round which was wound a dark cotton handkerchief, which half concealed one eye, and gave him a most sinister appearance. He still retained the loose Turkish trousers and the high-heeled boot; but, instead of the shawl waistband, a leather strap confined his clumsy pistols. He rode with the large shovel stirrup, which serves in lieu of spur; and, had not his knees been raised to the level of his little horse's back, his feet would scarcely have been lifted out of the deep mud with which our road was covered. On my departure from Tiflis, I had, as I have before mentioned, reduced my baggage to the smallest compass, in order to render myself inde-

pendent, in case I should find it impossible to procure cattle. Each of my horses, excepting the little Arab that I myself rode, carried his own clothing strapped upon his saddle, and also a pair of light saddle-bags containing what was required for the road. Besides this, I had a heavy pair of Turkish travelling-bags, which one of my own horses could carry at need, by mounting my groom upon my led horse. This arrangement was not necessary now, for the authority of my cavass instantly procured a man and horse as often as we needed a relay. It went against my conscience to see how the fellow lorded it over the poor villagers; and I often admired the contented disposition of this patient race. The very wretch whom you obliged to trudge for many a weary mile beside your horse, without perhaps the expectation of a recompense, was often as willing and good-humoured as if his task were self-imposed.

It was late when I reached the village of Chilpaukhli, a distance of nine Turkish hours

from Erzeroum. My horses had looked wistfully at many a village which we had passed unheeded; but the weather was fine, though threatening, and I wished to make the most of it.

My quarters were much the same as those of the preceding night, but the stable was full of buffaloes, far more offensive neighbours than horses or oxen. Two of these ungainly brutes were protruding their ugly heads within a disagreeable proximity of mine, and I suggested their changing places with my favourite horses. The sulky animals did not at all approve of quitting their comfortable berth; and I laughed to see a stupid Turk hitting them over the head with his fist—an operation certainly more painful to him than to them.

On the following morning, when I looked out to reconnoitre the weather, the scene forcibly reminded me of America. Day was scarcely beginning to dawn, and a heavy mist rendered the atmosphere damp and oppres-

sive. Round the stable-door stood carts and sledges, covered with a thick coat of snow; and half-a-dozen large rough dogs, such as are used in Canada for drawing fire-wood, were lying near the threshold. Before me lay a narrow valley, through the centre of which I could trace the dark windings of a sluggish stream; and the black pine-forests of the opposite hills were silvered with the last night's snow.

For the first few miles we followed the course of the brook, our only guide, for every track was quite effaced; then bending abruptly to our left, we plunged into the depths of the forest, and commenced the long and steep ascent of the Soghanloo Dagh. Here we were met by numerous strings of horses laden with fire-wood—for this range of mountains supplies the whole country round with fuel. Heaps of timber of a larger growth lay by the road-side ready to be transported to the fortress of Goomri. The snow at every step became deeper and deeper, and it was

with the greatest difficulty that our baggage-horse could extricate himself from the drifts. A little farther we met a courier from Erzeroum, with letters for the Pasha of Kars: he told us that the shorter road was now blocked up, and that we must make a circuit to avoid the mountain-passes.

During the last war between Russia and the Porte, the Turks made some slight opposition to the advance of the Russian army upon Erzeroum; but what could undisciplined troops, without a commander, do against a regular army? My guide pointed out to me two spots where his countrymen had made a stand. The first was a narrow defile, in which Othman Pasha did check the Russians for some time; the other was a table-land, clear of trees, where Asad Pasha, the Seraskier of Erzeroum, drew up his forces in order of battle. Mehmet did not, however, prove to my satisfaction that he awaited the arrival of the enemy.

At length we reached the spot where the

summer and winter roads branched off, and saw before us a steep zig-zag path covered with a sheet of ice which led into the plain below. The snow seemed only to have fallen in the mountains, for not a single patch was visible upon the plain. We dismounted from our horses and allowed them to find their own way down, which they accomplished in a surprising manner. I had not, however, much leisure to attend to my four-footed companion, as it required all my exertions to prevent my own legs from running away with me.

A two hours' ride along the plain brought us to the town of Bardooz, built on the banks of a considerable stream, and overlooked by a deserted castle of a very singular construction. The old grey rock had been fashioned into rudely-shaped bastions, connected by curtains of roughly-hewn masonry; and, from a distance, I was doubtful whether it were indeed a castle, or merely a freak of nature. Mehmet insisted upon dismounting and allowing our horses a short breathing-time, for he

and I had pushed on before my party. The day was mild and pleasant, and I seated myself on the low balcony in front of the "Menzil Khaneh," or post-house, where I was quickly furnished with a pipe and cup of bitter coffee. While sitting there, a cavalcade of about thirty people entered the village. They were pilgrims from the Mussulman provinces of Russia on their way to Erzeroum; from whence, about this season of the year, a pious multitude flocks to the holy shrines of Kerbelah and Mecca. Their leader, an old grey-bearded Turk, whose dark green turban indicated his claim to a descent from the Prophet, carried a banner, likewise of the sacred colour; and, drawing up his horse in the middle of the bazaar, harangued the multitude upon the blessed effects of a pilgrimage to the tomb of the founder of their religion. By the time he had finished his exhortation I had smoked out my pipe; and, as our roads lay together, I enlisted under his banner. I found him a very entertaining

companion: he had made the pilgrimage at least a dozen times; indeed, it was his only business to enlist recruits in the service of the Prophet. Many of his followers were merchants, who sought not only spiritual but temporal advantages; and their well-filled saddle-bags contained the cloths and cutlery of Europe, to be bartered against the dates of Yemen and the coffee of Mocha. At a short distance from the cavalcade a string of camels followed, across each of which was slung a pair of kajavas, or large panniers, covered with blue cloth. In these were seated the female pilgrims, who formed a large proportion of the band.

On leaving Erzeroum the "Hajis" proceed to Damascus, their numbers increasing at every step. There they usually halt for some weeks, and their march from thence to Mecca is conducted with all the order and discipline of an army. It was already dark when I reached my halting-place, a small village called Ziven, half-way be-

twixt Kars and Erzeroum. The night promised well; the heavy clouds had lifted, and the clear blue sky foretold a sharp frost.

As I looked down from my elevated platform upon the stable below me, I was struck with the scene of comfort. A blazing fire of pine-logs threw a vivid light into the farthest recesses of the crowded stable; my horses had been groomed and clothed, and were now busily intent upon their evening feed, while my men had gathered round a large pillau, quite a luxurious repast to these hardy fellows, who will toil for weeks together without other food than bread. I felt half inclined to envy them their cheerful meal: yet, unsociable as it may appear, I should have hesitated to barter the independence of my movements for the society of the most agreeable companion.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Araxes—Shepherd's Bridge—Hassan Kaleh—Tatar Travelling—Reach Erzeroum—British Consul—Visit to the Seraskier Pasha—Disgrace of the Seraskier—News from Persia—A little Friend—Trade of Erzeroum—Horses—Warnings to Depart.

November 8th.—Long before daylight I commenced my march; and, after a six hours' ride, I reached the summit of a low range of hills which overlook the valley of the Araxes. On the opposite bank of the stream runs the main road between Erzeroum and Tabreez, every foot of which was familiar to me; for, at the time that I first travelled it, I was new to Oriental scenery, and novelty impressed each scene deeply on my memory.

Our road now ran parallel to the river, and a couple of hours' ride brought us to the "Shepherd's Bridge," said to have been built

by a devout shepherd, some hundreds of years ago—in those days when good Mahomedans, with a zeal and public spirit worthy of a better motive, reckoned it a meritorious action to build bridges, and fountains, and caravanserais, for the accommodation of the way-worn traveller. On the summit of a precipitous hill, which overhangs the bridge, stands the tomb of the shepherd shadowed by a clump of stunted pine-trees.

When I arrived at the bridge, I found that I could, by pushing on, reach Erzeroum that evening. I therefore gave orders to my servants to remain that night at Hassan Kaleh, and to rejoin me the following morning. Attended only by Mehmet, I quickened my pace; and, skirting the low belt of brushwood which concealed the bed of the Araxes, we passed the small village of Kiupri Kieu, and soon arrived within sight of the walled town of Hassan Kaleh, which stands upon a spur of the mountain-range which forms the northern boundary of the plain of the Araxes. At

the foot of the town, without the walls, stands a low dome, which covers a hot spring, the favourite resort of the whole country round.

Entering the ruinous town through a gateless gateway, we pulled up at the post-house, and Mehmet's authoritative summons soon brought out the two best horses in the well-filled stable. Our saddles were quickly changed, and away we galloped along the muddy plain till we reached the foot of a steep, winding hill, which obliged us to take a pull upon our horses. Daylight had meanwhile deserted us, but a young moon lighted us across the pass; and, when we had accomplished the descent, the domes and minarets of Erzeroum rose full in view. We now redoubled our pace, but soon the broken pavement, and heaps of rubbish, warned us to slacken our speed. When I dismounted at the British Consulate no one recognised me, for my arrival was quite unexpected; but, having made myself known, nothing could exceed the hospitality of Mr. Brant. His

little party was just sitting down to dinner, and, after my long ride of eighteen Turkish hours, I did justice to his English fare. It was a pleasant feeling to find myself once more in the society of my own countrymen, and I had much to learn both of English and Persian news.

November 9th.—I woke about my usual hour; but, finding that I was in a room, instead of a stable, I remembered that my labours were over, for the present at least, and I was not sorry to compose myself to sleep again. Soon after breakfast my horses arrived, and I sent them to a neighbouring caravanserai. At noon I accompanied the consul on a visit to the old Seraskier Pasha, who, on his return from Goomri, where, as I have already mentioned, he had been deputed by the Sultan to meet the Emperor, was disagreeably surprised by finding an order for his recall from his Pashalik. His successor is Osman Pasha, a Georgian by birth, who has held for some years the government of

Scodra in Albania. It is a mystery to every one what can have occasioned his sudden disgrace, and not least so to the old man himself, who had always thought himself firm in the Sultan's favour.

We had to traverse nearly the whole length of the town before we reached the citadel in which the Pasha's palace stands. The streets, like those of Kars, were very filthy, and troops of hungry dogs were routing among the heaps of rubbish which nearly choked the path. Unlike the cities of Persia, the houses of Erzeroum open upon the street, but the windows are guarded by iron gratings, and wooden lattices secure the privacy of the harem. We entered the fortress by a strong and massive gateway, flanked by two mutilated, though still beautiful minarets. The contrast which the deserted courts afforded to the gay and stirring scene which they had presented when last I saw them was very striking; and the unwonted silence which reigned in the long corridor showed that the tide of fortune had

set into another channel. We were ushered into a large saloon, the upper half of which was furnished with a broad divan, but the room felt damp and cold, for the large fireplace was empty. The Pasha's doctor joined us, one of those Italian adventurers who swarm in the Levant; and before many minutes, the old Seraskier himself made his appearance. I think that he took our visit kindly, at the moment when his own friends and followers kept aloof from him. The Consul expressed his regret that he was about to quit Erzeroum, and ventured to hope that the Sultan had only recalled him in order to retain so old and faithful a servant about his person. The Seraskier confessed his ignorance of the motives of his recall, and added, that, having served his master so long, his only ambition now was to be allowed to end his days in peace and quietness. "However," he added, stroking his long grey beard, "whatever may await me, it is my destiny." There was something dignified in the old

man's resignation. He is a weak, vain man, but his conduct towards the British has ever been courteous and obliging. He talked much about his interview with the Emperor of Russia at Goomri. I mentioned my wish to return to Persia by the road of Bitlis and Van, and he promised to furnish me with an active and trustworthy cavass, and with letters to the different Pashas, through whose governments I should pass. We then took our leave, and returned to the Consulate.

The next morning a courier arrived from Constantinople, announcing the exile of the old Seraskier to Gallipoli, and that an officer had been sent to accompany him to his place of banishment. Great consternation prevailed at the Palace, and we heard that the old man began to tremble for his life. His fear, however, was groundless, for the bowstring is rarely used except in cases of rebellion.

A few days after my arrival at Erzeroum, the couriers whom we had been expecting from Tehran and from Constantinople both

arrived; and as soon as I had answered my letters, I prepared to resume my journey. My letters from Tehran informed me, that, when the last courier quitted the Persian camp, the Shah had advanced within a few marches of Herat, but that his success was considered very doubtful. The Ambassador and the British officers had been driven from their summer residence in the mountains by the cold, and had returned to Tehran. This intelligence quite decided my movements, since it showed that my presence was not required in Persia.

While walking through the Bazaar, I was surprised to hear myself addressed in Persian by a childish voice, and turning round, I saw a little boy who had been my neighbour at Tehran, and who had rarely failed to pay me a daily visit. His father had been master of the horse to the late Shah, but having married one of the king's daughters, his former wife, the mother of this little boy, found herself neglected. She had, therefore, for the

sake of a little amusement, undertaken a pilgrimage to Mecca, there being no such place as Bath or Cheltenham in the dominions of the Shah. She was now awaiting the departure of the pilgrims from Erzeroum. These expeditions consume nearly twelve months from Tehran, including the necessary halts at Erzeroum and Damascus.

Erzeroum has suffered severely from the same cause to which I attributed the ruinous and impoverished state of Kars; viz., the loss of its Armenian population. The Russian army wintered at Erzeroum in 1829; and when, in the course of the following summer, they evacuated Turkish Armenia, a vast number of the Christian inhabitants accompanied their march. Some had drawn upon themselves the anger of the Turks, by the haughtiness with which they had behaved during the occupation of the Pashalik by the Russians, and feared to brave their vengeance: others were persuaded by their priests to emigrate to a country which enjoyed the blessings of

Christian rule, and no means were neglected by the agents of Russia towards the furtherance of an object which would at the same time strengthen Georgia and weaken Turkey. Whether the Armenians bettered their condition by this change of masters may be doubted. Many have returned to the provinces from which they were induced to emigrate. The condition of those who remained has been materially improved since the Turks have learnt their value. I have frequently made the minutest inquiries among them, and with the exception of the "kharaj," or poll-tax, to which all the Christian subjects of the Porte are liable, I could learn no cause of fair complaint against the Turkish government.

The trade of Erzeroum is almost limited to the passage of goods between Constantinople and Persia, which has been considerably increased since the establishment of weekly steam-boats on the Black Sea. The khans, or caravanserais, when I was there, were

filled with pack-horses; and the custom-house, an extensive establishment, was lumbered up with bales of goods. Yet, in spite of this thriving appearance, our trade in Persia is by no means flourishing; the markets are glutted with British manufactures, by the over-speculations of the Persian merchants resident in Constantinople, numbers of whom have failed in consequence; and, in the present impoverished state of Persia, the consumption of European goods is daily diminishing. Besides these causes, large quantities of manufactures are annually imported into Persia from Russia, both by the way of Tabreez and by the Caspian, which, though inferior to ours, are cheaper, and find a readier sale. The bazaars of Erzeroum are poor and of small extent; and the manufacture of copper utensils, which once formed the principal branch of its industry, is now almost abandoned. The market appears to be well supplied, and great numbers of oxen are weekly killed. In Persia, especially in

Tehran, beef is rarely seen, and is eaten only by the very poorest classes. This does not arise from any religious scruple, but merely from the decided inferiority of that meat in a country where there is so little pasturage.

The horses of Erzeroum are stout, serviceable animals, rarely standing above fourteen hands and a half high, with heavy necks, but generally showing some blood about the head. Their price varies from five hundred to fifteen hundred piastres, viz., from five to fifteen pounds. The pilgrims, on their return from Mecca and Damascus, not unfrequently bring with them some of the Arabs of the Desert. I saw a grey colt in the stable of the head of the customs, for which I offered seven thousand piastres—a long price in this country—but his master demanded twelve.

During the week that I remained at Erzeroum, no snow had fallen, but the frosty mornings and evenings were very nipping. The plain, at one extremity of which the city stands, is more than six thousand feet above

the level of the sea, and the winters are long and severe. The weather was threatening on the evening of the fifteenth, and I began to fear that the high mountain passes which I had to traverse before reaching the shores of the lake of Van would be blocked with snow.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Departure from Erzeroum — Ertepeh — Common Room — Curious Escort — Mountain Pass — Armenian Villages — Dangerous Country — Armenian Burying-Grounds — Koordish Encampment — Mourad, or Euphrates — Wretched Accommodation — Moush — Message from the Pasha.

On the 16th I quitted Erzeroum, accompanied for the first mile or two by all the European residents. I had to retrace my steps for the first two hours, until I reached the bottom of the pass which divides the plains of Erzeroum and Hassan-Kaleh. There two roads branched off, the one leading to Tabreez, the other to Moush and Bitlis. The day was unusually soft and pleasant for the time of the year, but the dazzling whiteness of the mountain range which lay before me showed that a recent fall of snow had visited the higher regions. I skirted the range of hills which

formed the southern boundary of the valley of the Araxes, until I arrived opposite the conspicuous castle of Hassan-Kaleh, and then entering a narrow valley, which penetrated into the mountains, I halted for the night at the small village of Ertepeh, ready to commence at day-break the formidable ascent which awaited us. The large room, in one corner of which my carpets were spread, seemed common to the whole village both for their meals and their devotions. At sunset I heard the deep and solemn call to prayers sung from its terrace-roof: a cloth was spread in the centre of the floor, and after the necessary ablutions, all devoutly turned in the direction of Mecca, and said their evening prayer. A little later they again assembled round their frugal board; and the last sound which struck my ears before I fell asleep was the low buzz of voices, as these village politicians, seated round the expiring fire, discussed the probable causes of the old Seraskier's disgrace.

My cavass insisted upon our taking an escort from the village, for which there could not have existed the slightest necessity. He wasted some precious time in waiting for the fellows, and when they did come, provoked as I was, I could not help laughing at their appearance. Only one of them carried arms, a rusty old matchlock slung across his shoulder. This was their leader. His followers were ragged scarecrows on little shaggy horses, some without saddles, others without bridles. Ibrahim himself could not help smiling at this Falstaff's troop, but told me that he had received particular injunctions from the Pasha to omit no precautions for my safety. To do the fellows justice, I found them useful, for the drifts of snow had in many places obliterated the track; and the road, which at the best of times is a mere mountain-path, lay on the verge of deep and dangerous ravines. After six hours and a half of alternate steep ascent and descent, we reached the village of Kullee at two in

the afternoon. Ibrahim thought that we had done enough for one day; and upon my inquiring whether there were not some village at three or four hours' distance, he assured me that there was not a house nearer than six. What the Tatar affirmed, the villagers of course swore to; but I happened to know better, for Brant had allowed me to make a few extracts from a letter which he had received from an American missionary who had performed this journey some months before. I therefore insisted upon proceeding, and was very near quarrelling with Ibrahim for the sulky manner in which he obeyed me. I had, however, learnt from experience, that this is the way with them all; and that the only way to manage them is to be firm, and at the same time temperate. Evening was drawing on apace, and I began to think that I had done a foolish thing. I did not like the idea of being benighted in such a country, and such a season; still less did I like to confess that Ibrahim had been right. It was

therefore with double pleasure that I espied a column of smoke issuing from a ravine almost beneath my horse's feet; and a few moments showed us a cluster of hovels, surrounded by stacks of fuel and forage, the two essentials of a night's quarters. The name of the village is Aghteran. Notwithstanding the apparent poverty of these Turkish and Armenian villages, I have never found the slightest difficulty in procuring all that was wanted for my party. There was always plenty of barley and chopped straw for the horses; wheaten cakes, butter, cheese, and other preparations of milk, besides fowls and eggs for ourselves. Rice was not always to be procured, but a pillau is made by substituting wheat. The buffalo's milk, which is by far the most plentiful in this country, has a peculiar flavour, which is very disagreeable to me.

November 18*th*.—It was considerably after dark when I reached the end of a very interesting stage, much to the relief of Ibrahim,

whom I believe to be an arrant coward. Just as it was getting dusk one of my escort, whom I take from one village to the next, shook his nerves somewhat roughly, by pointing out a heap of stones by the road side, which marked the spot where an unwary traveller was murdered, a few weeks ago, in consequence of lagging behind his caravan.

Near this place we passed an Armenian burying-ground; the village to which it had belonged had sunk into ruins. Several of the tomb-stones, like those still to be found in some of the burying-grounds in Switzerland, were ornamented with emblems of the trade or calling of him whose ashes reposed beneath. The most striking was a rudely sculptured ram, standing upon a broad slab of stone, carved with Armenian letters.

We were on horseback before daybreak, and after crossing, for about three hours, one of those undulating plains which form the common feature of Armenia, we reached the village of Aroos, on the river of the same

name. Gladly did I mark the decreasing snow as we advanced to the southward. The climate here was quite delicious. In spite of the lateness of the season, a few families of the wandering Koords still lingered in their autumn pastures, pitching their black tents on the southern bank of some protecting range. The weather was, indeed, so genial that the approach of winter was almost imperceptible; groups of shepherds lay basking in the sun, in the midst of their large flocks; and the surrounding pastures, refreshed by recent showers, were still covered with a short but tender herbage. An "Eelyaut" encampment, in a cheerful and well-watered country, is one of the most picturesque and happiest scenes imaginable. A patriarchal simplicity stamps their manners and seems almost to realize the sweet pictures of the poet's Arcadia. Free as the air they breathe, they shift their goat's-hair tents from stream to spring, from valley to mountain, with the changing seasons, and look down with pity

and contempt upon the "sitters in houses." Although Mahomedans, their women are unveiled, and they not only share the toils of their husbands and brothers, but sometimes emulate them in feats of horsemanship. Though rarely pretty, the glow of health, and the good-humoured expression of these young Koordish maidens, supply the place of beauty, and their gay costume displays to great advantage their full round forms and sunburnt features. Upon them devolve the labours of the dairy and the loom, while the young men tend the flocks, or scour the country round in search of game. The Elders of the tribe enjoy the true *otium cum dignitate*, seated in front of their huts, where they receive the passing stranger, and smoke with him the pipe of welcome. The black Koordish tent, supported by its many poles, is a very picturesque object; and when they are grouped together on the margin of some mountain-stream, surrounded by their flocks and herds, they form a very pretty picture.

From Aroos to the "Kizil Chai," or Red River, so called apparently from the colour of the rocks between which it flows, occupied me two hours, and after four hours more I descended to the banks of the "Mourad." This is the eastern and principal branch of the Euphrates, which has its source not far from the Turkish town of Diadin, to the north-east of the Lake of Van. Even here it is a noble stream, as it emerges from a deep ravine, and, bending at a right angle to the south, flows rapidly through a valley which widens at every moment, till it joins the broad and fertile plain of Moush.

The sun had already set when we reached the "Mourad," and we quickened our pace, guided by the rippling of the water. More than once we were misled by the barking of dogs and the glimmer of a feeble light, which proceeded from some Koordish tents, and I was becoming rather impatient, when a turn of the road suddenly showed us a few wretched

hovels, clustered on the high bank of a dry water-course. It required all the authority of Ibrahim, backed by an unsparing use of his Tatar whip, to procure me even such accommodation as a filthy crowded stable afforded; and it was nearly midnight before my poor horses, who had made a march of sixteen Turkish hours, received a grain of barley. Accustomed as I was to roughing it under every shape, I found it quite impossible to close an eye that night, and grudging my servants that sleep which I could not enjoy, I roused them long before daylight had penetrated into our gloomy quarter, and mounted my horse, feverish and unrefreshed. To my great annoyance, within half a mile of the miserable hamlet of Skouee, we passed one of the most thriving-looking Armenian villages that I have seen since quitting Erzeroum.

Within an hour and a half we rejoined the Euphrates, which was flowing in a south-south-west direction through the plain of

Moush. At the foot of the hills on the opposite side stands the town from which the plain takes its name. We crossed the Euphrates by an old stone bridge, of many arches, high and narrow and without a parapet. A second river was to be passed before we reached the town of Moush, the "Kara Su," or Black Water, a sluggish, treacherous-looking stream. With some difficulty we forded it, for the water was unusually high, and we then entered the town, which stands upon a low knoll isolated from the adjacent hills by a deep ravine planted with vineyards. I alighted at the house of the Pasha's Lieutenant, that dignitary residing at a castle some miles from the town. My host, a stout, good-humoured Turk, was sitting at the open window, with his right sleeve tucked up to the elbow, and his fingers buried in some savory mess. A tall thin Moollah, with a white turban, sat opposite to him, no less agreeably employed. I seated myself be-

tween them, and imitated such good examples. My host was very civil, and when I took my departure he sent his son to escort me beyond the town. Ibrahim had preceded me in order to deliver some letters from the Seraskier to "Emin Pasha," whose palace I saw at some distance from the road, on the slope of a hill. I had already left it a considerable way behind, when an old man overtook me at full gallop, and announced himself as a chaoush of the Pasha, who requested that I would not pass without visiting him, and partaking of a pipe. I electrified the messenger by declining, in the civillest, but firmest terms, to return with him. To refuse the Pasha's invitation seemed to the old man little less than sacrilege. In vain I pleaded that my horses were tired, that the day was far spent, and that I myself was unwell; he would hear of no excuse, and was as difficult to shake off as the old man in Sinbad. Seizing my horse's rein, he attempted to carry me

off against my will, declaring that he could not venture to appear alone before his lord. At length I lost all patience, and spurring my horse, I freed myself from his grasp, and bade him begone, and give my answer to the Pasha.

CHAPTER XXX.

Plain of Moosh—Arkavank—Flocks of Cranes—Xenophon's Description of the Armenians—Bitlis—Sheriff Beg—Koordish Stable—Lake of Van—Tedavan—Sipan Dagh—Water of the Lake.

THE Plain of Moush is thickly studded with villages. They are almost all Armenian, but in the winter the nomade Koords of the district, who, during the summer, pasture their flocks in the distant mountains, are quartered upon the villagers. Large quantities of tobacco are cultivated on the banks of the "Kara Su," and some portion of it finds its way even to the bazaars of Constantinople.

At three hours from Moush I halted for a few moments to change my baggage cattle. I had alighted, and was standing apart from the crowd, when an old man approached me, and, giving me a significant look, pinched my arm.

This I found to be a sort of masonic sign among Armenians, to intimate that wine is to be had. Xenophon, in the description of his march through Armenia, speaks of "old wines exceeding fragrant," which he met with in some of the villages; but either he was in greater luck than I was, or his palate was less fastidious. The sun had just set as I entered Arkavank, a straggling village on the bank of the "Kara Su."

It was curious, while traversing the same country which Xenophon passed through more than two thousand years before, to read his description of the mode of living of the inhabitants, and to remark how much of that description is applicable even at the present day, after the lapse of so many centuries. Their houses were then as now under ground, and were tenanted by their flocks and herds, as well as by their families. The Armenians of the present day seem indeed to differ little in their manner of life from their ancestors, excepting that they have lost some of the

luxuries which their forefathers enjoyed. Besides the "old wine" to which I have already alluded, Xenophon speaks of a species of "malt liquor," preserved in earthen jars, a beverage of which I could find no traces in modern Armenia.

November 20th.—I was in my saddle before sunrise; the morning was bitterly cold, the ground was white with frost, and a steam was rising from the Kara Su which drove away the thousands of cranes which haunt that river. Their plaintive cry, as they circled in large flights above our heads, was most dismal. When the rays of the sun began to make themselves felt, the day was bright and genial, and the frost quickly disappeared.

The escort which had accompanied me from Moush was unusually well-mounted and equipped, and, as we rode across the elastic turf, they amused themselves and me by races and feats of horsemanship. They were not, however, equally skilful with the Persian or Circassian in the management of either horse

or weapon. Every man we met was armed; not a peasant drives his cow to pasture, or his donkey in quest of firewood, without the classical weapons of sword and shield, not that the latter is on the scale of the "clypei septemplicis," for it resembles rather in size and form the cover of a coal-scuttle.

When I arrived within a few miles of Bitlis, I despatched the leader of my escort with a letter to Sheriff Beg, the governor, a brother of the Pasha of Moush. Bitlis is a very curious town: its houses are all of hewn stone, and their grated windows give them the appearance of prisons. At the bottom of a deep and broad ravine stands a ruined castle, perched upon the top of a precipitous rock, of very small area. The town is built upon the steep banks of two mountain-streams, which unite beneath the castle walls. The governor's palace, towards which I bent my steps, is a quadranglar building, overlooking both town and castle. I had commenced the long and slippery ascent which

conducted to it, when I was met by several horsemen, whom Sheriff Beg had sent to meet me. On entering the gateway I found myself in a spacious court surrounded by a balcony, to which I ascended by a broad flight of wooden stairs. At the farthest extremity of the balcony I found the Beg, seated on a low divan; he welcomed me with much kindness, and while an apartment was being prepared for me, we partook of coffee and sherbet. Sheriff Beg is a tall, well-made man, of about thirty, with a pleasing manner, and a handsome but melancholy cast of features. His dress was more than commonly rich and gay—a mixture of the Turkish and Koordish costumes. Of the latter he had adopted the graceful head-dress, a turban of striped silk, the ends of which hung down below his shoulders.

By his side was seated his favourite son, a handsome, intelligent boy of about seven, who for some moments regarded the novel apparition of a Frank with a mixture of fear and curiosity. The latter feeling, however, soon

prevailed, and we became such friends, that it required all his father's authority to induce him to leave me. It was a luxury to find a clean and cheerful room, with a good blazing fire, and to throw off my heavy travelling-dress for the first time since leaving Erzeroum. When I had made my toilet I rejoined the Beg on the balcony; and at sunset an excellent dinner was brought to my apartment. I had scarcely finished my meal when my host was announced; he remained with me until a late hour, and I was much pleased with his gentlemanlike manners and intelligent conversation. He was anxious that I should remain for some days under his roof, but, as soon as I mentioned that I was really pressed for time, he, with true courtesy, ceased to urge the subject, and ordered an escort to be in readiness on the following morning to conduct me to the castle of Khan Mahmoud, a Koordish chieftain, whose territories lie on the southern shore of the lake of Van. When

my host took his leave, he begged that I would excuse any want of etiquette, "For," he added, "we are all Koords here."

November 21*st.*—When I awoke, which was not till late, the snow was falling in large flakes; and had I consulted my own inclination, I would certainly have remained at Bitlis. But these signs of winter were an additional reason for not loitering on my way, lest the high mountain-passes on the Persian frontier should be blocked with snow. My host had taken a fancy to a large Turcoman horse which I had with me, and requested that I would visit his stable and see if there was anything that I would accept in exchange. I saw several handsome Koordish horses, and two or three well-bred showy Arabs, but nothing to tempt me to part with my old travelling companion, whose good qualities I had learnt by long experience. Unlike the generality of Eastern stables, that of Sheriff Beg was divided into stalls, and the high con-

dition and careful grooming of his horses evinced the pride which he himself took in his stud.

As I only intended proceeding as far as the shores of the lake that evening, I did not leave Bitlis till the afternoon. The snow had changed to sleet, and an easterly wind drove it against our faces. The steep descent, which led from the palace into the town, was so slippery, that our horses could with difficulty keep their legs; and when we had cleared the ill-paved streets and entered upon the open moor, the wind blew in such violent gusts, that our horses could hardly face it. We took shelter for half an hour under lee of the wall of a ruined caravanserai; but, as there appeared no signs of the storm abating, we moved on as quickly as we could, anxious to reach our halting-place before night set in. We soon came within sight of Tedavan, a small village situated on a bay, which forms the south-western extremity of the Lake of Van. Nothing could be more dreary than this our first

view: sky, lake, and moor were all of one dull grey, save where a few patches of snow still lay on the hill-side. One single skiff lay at anchor near the shore, at the foot of a low mound covered with the ruins of an ancient town. In the East the absence of the usual brilliant sunshine is a deathblow to all picturesque effect; and the want of those comforts, which, with a cloudless sky above us, we scarcely miss, is then most strongly felt. The groups which so often attract our admiration when seated in every variety of picturesque attitude upon their low balconies or terraced roofs, look wretched when huddled round a smouldering fire in the dark recess of a filthy stable; and the slipshod Turk, picking his way amid torrents of rain through heaps of mud, loses all that stateliness and dignity which usually characterize his every motion.

November 22nd. — When I mounted my horse a hazy moon and a few pale stars were struggling faintly against the heavy mist, while a lurid streak on the horizon showed

that the sun was rising behind the same dense canopy. It seemed very doubtful for a while whether he would be able to prevail, but at length, a strong north-west wind coming to his assistance, the fog was quickly dispersed, and the lake, hitherto hidden from our view, burst upon us in all its grandeur. To the eye accustomed to the painful monotony of the vast plains of Asia, the sight of a broad sheet of water is inexpressibly refreshing; and, as I rode along the southern shore of the lake, I thought that I should never tire of gazing upon its unruffled surface. The changeful sky, at one moment of a deep unbroken blue, at the next chequered with light fleecy clouds, and finally towards evening settling into dark masses, which threatened an approaching storm, produced a thousand brilliant effects of light and shade. To the north the lake is bounded by a noble range of mountains, the highest of which is the "Sipan Dagh," at least eleven or twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea. These were covered with

snow from their summit to their base, while, with the exception of the lofty chain of Erdoz, the mountains to the south of the lake were entirely free from snow. They rise precipitously from the water's edge, and are partially clothed with woods of dwarf-oak and hazel; but, wherever they recede from the lake, small valleys are formed of exceeding beauty and fertility. In most of these are little villages surrounded with orchards, where, had the season been earlier, I would have gladly lingered.

The waters of the lake of Van are exceedingly bitter to the taste—far more so than those of the Caspian. A species of herring is taken in great abundance at some seasons of the year; but I tried in vain to procure a single fish at any of these villages. At noon I halted for an hour, and the sun was so powerful that I preferred breakfasting in the open air. At sunset we quitted the shores of the lake, whose waters looked as black as ink, and ascended a steep and winding road which

led across a high mountain-pass. It was very late when we reached the wretched Armenian village of Narnigas; and during the last hour the snow fell thick and fast. I thought that we should never reach the end of our stage, and had fully persuaded myself that my guide had mistaken the path, when the welcome bark of dogs proclaimed that the village was at hand. Our accommodation was most miserable, for we were crowded into a stable which resembled a Noah's ark. Children were squalling the whole night through, and two young buffaloes, mistaking my lair for their own, walked over me in the dark.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Convent and Island of Aghtamar—Khan Mahmoud—Castle of Pasvakh—Vastan—Artemid—Legends of the Sipan Dagh —Van—Armenians—Pasha of Van—Ibrahim Tatar.

November 23rd.—CONTRARY to my anticipations the morning was lovely, and all traces of the last night's snow quickly disappeared beneath the influence of the genial sunbeams. We crossed several successive ranges of lofty hills, from each of which I vainly looked for the blue lake, till at length, when I least expected it, at a sudden bend of a narrow valley, I saw before me the island and convent of Aghtamar. This name is given by the Armenians to the lake itself. The convent stands upon a rock of small extent, at a distance of about a thousand yards from the shore, and was, during many centuries, the residence of an Armenian bishop, who dis-

claimed the authority of the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin. The church of Aghtamar has, however, returned to its allegiance. I halted to breakfast at a small village on the margin of the lake, and despatched a horseman to the neighbouring Castle of Pasvakh to announce my approach to Khan Mahmoud.

Khan Mahmoud is a powerful Koordish chieftain, nominally subject to the jurisdiction of the Pasha of Van, but virtually independent. Several times he has raised the standard of rebellion against the Porte, and he has hitherto always escaped with impunity. Last year he seized a district belonging to the Pashalik of Van, which he still retains. Besides these more daring exploits, the Khan condescends to plunder any caravans that may chance to pass through his territories.

The castle of this Koordish Rob Roy stands on the summit of a low conical hill, detached from the chain of the Erdoz, and overlooking

a well-cultivated valley abounding in villages, and stretching as far as the shores of the lake. A winding path of exceeding steepness conducts to the low and narrow gateway which opens upon the principal court. The chief himself was unfortunately absent upon a hunting excursion, and it was uncertain when he would return. I regretted losing an opportunity of seeing a man who has made himself the terror of the surrounding country; but it would have been very inconvenient to me to remain long, and I half suspected that his hunting excursion might prove to be a foray.

The court was crowded with the Khan's retainers,—tall, handsome Koords, all armed with spears and pistols, and clad in the very picturesque garb of their country. I was received with great courtesy by the master of the household, who ushered me through a dark corridor into a long, low hall, dimly-lighted by narrow openings in the massive walls, resembling loopholes rather than win-

dows. Coffee and pipes were handed round, succeeded by sherbet; and I found the old Koord an entertaining companion. Once, indeed, I was not very well pleased at his admiration of my watch, and his broad hints that he would like very much to be the owner of it. But there was no cause of uneasiness; for, while under the protection of these Koordish chiefs, you are perfectly secure.

I now dismissed the trusty servant whom Sheriff Beg had sent with me, and gave him a letter of thanks to his lord, who had requested that I would give him notice of my safe arrival at the Castle of Pasvakh. Escorted by a party of Khan Mahmoud's horsemen, I resumed my journey towards Van; and, descending to the shores of the lake, I rode along the sandy beach. After three hours I found myself beneath the wall of a dismantled fortress, whose outline was barely traceable in the gloom of falling night. This was the ancient castle of Vastan, once a royal

palace, but now a heap of ruins. Fallen as it is, it has at least survived the race of kings who held their court within its tottering walls. At the foot of the hill on which the castle stands lies the village of Vastan, inhabited entirely by Koords. The quarter assigned to me was a large empty stable without a fire; so, without waiting for my evening meal, I wrapped myself in my fur cloak and was soon asleep.

On the morrow, having despatched a horseman at daylight to the Pasha of Van, with a letter from the Seraskier, I followed leisurely. It was not long before we came within sight of the city, which lies at the end of a deep bay on the eastern shore of the lake. In summer the view must be beautiful, for the situation of the citadel is bold and commanding; and the town, which, on a nearer approach, is little better than Kars, is almost entirely masked by the extensive gardens which surround it.

At about seven miles from the city we halted to breakfast at the village of Artemid,

situated upon a steep acclivity arising from the shores of the lake. The lower part of the village is half concealed among orchards, which almost overhang the water. The mountain of the Sipan Dagh looks very grand from this point, and is worthy of the tradition which obtains among the Armenians of the country, that the Ark grounded upon its summit, before it finally rested upon Ararat. Another tradition which I have heard relates that a large city existed on the very spot where the mountain now stands; that the inhabitants were so buried in sin that the Almighty caused three mountains to move from the east, the north, and the south, and suspended them above the devoted city. The inhabitants, however, were so blind to their impending ruin, that they mistook the dark mass which hung above their heads for a thunder-cloud, and their destruction came upon them unawares. Subterranean passages are said still to exist beneath the mountain, by which some daring adventurers have suc-

ceeded in penetrating into the heart of the buried city.

Van is acknowledged to be a town of very remote antiquity; Colonel Sheil, who passed through this pashalik in the summer of last year, on a mission to the camp of Reschid Pasha, mentions, in a memoir which has been published in the Journal of the Geographical Society, that, "according to St. Martin, the historian of Armenia, a tradition exists among the Armenians, that Van was founded by Semiramis, and called by her Shemiram Gerd. This account," he adds, "appears to be confirmed by the researches of Professor Schultz, who is said to have conceived that he deciphered the word 'Shemiram' in one of the arrow-headed inscriptions which he copied. Ruined by the course of time, the city of Semiramis was rebuilt by King Van, who lived a short time previously to the expedition of Alexander the Great, and bestowed his own name upon it; but, having again fallen into decay, it was restored by Vagh Arshag

(Valarsaces), brother to Arsaces, the first king of Armenia of the race of the Arsacidæ, about one hundred and fifty years before Christ. The city fell successively under the domination of the Seljukis, of Timour, and of the Turcomans, and was finally captured by the Osmanlis in 1533, and has remained in their possession ever since that period."

The Armenians are a wonderful nation, and it is much to be regretted that their early history should be involved in so much obscurity. Like the Jews, they are scattered over the face of the earth, and have retained, in the heart of foreign nations, their religion and their language, besides many peculiarities of manner and appearance. By their industry and enterprise they have succeeded in monopolizing almost entirely the trade and commerce of the East, and form the wealthier portion of the population both of Persia and Turkey. In the latter country more especially they have possessed themselves of every lucrative calling, owing to the pride and in-

dolence of the Turks, who think it derogatory to their dignity to follow any mercantile pursuit. The greatest ambition of an Armenian is to become the banker of a Pasha, which post gives him almost an unlimited control over the revenues of the pashalik. A considerable proportion of the Armenians have returned to the Catholic Church, from which their nation seceded, when, in the year 491, they rejected the authority of the Council of Chalcedon. These Catholic Armenians are generally superior in education and intelligence to their countrymen, which is in some measure owing to the circulation of knowledge occasioned by the literary labours of the Catholic Armenian convent in Venice. When we consider how often the kingdom of Armenia has been overrun by the armies of Toghrul and Timour, of the Caliphs and of the Shahs of Persia, each of whom carried into captivity vast numbers of its inhabitants; when we consider also how many thousands have migrated to distant countries in search

of wealth or safety, we cannot but wonder that so many should still be found in the homes of their fathers. The Armenian villages in these pashaliks which border upon Koordistan are not promising in their exterior, but the large herds of cows and buffaloes, and the numerous flocks of sheep which at evening may be seen returning from their pastures, attest the pastoral wealth of their inhabitants. These flocks furnish them with almost every article of food and raiment; and the high plains of Armenia, watered by frequent showers, yield abundant crops of wheat and barley. Fuel, the next most necessary article for the poor, is furnished plentifully by the sweeping of their stables, which is made into cakes, and dried during the summer.

The lake appeared to me to be about five-and-thirty or forty miles in length, and from fifteen to twenty in breadth. During the two days that I skirted its shores I did not descry a single sail, nor even a fishing boat.

Soon after quitting Artemid we reached the southern extremity of the lake, and, bending towards the north, we passed over a plain, till we reached the suburbs of the city. For more than a mile we threaded our way between high garden walls, before we arrived at the gate of the city, which lies under the southern face of the isolated rock upon which the castle stands. Here I was met by several of the Pasha's attendants, who conducted me into the town, to the palace, where a quarter had been prepared for me. As soon as I had disencumbered myself of my heavy riding boots, I repaired to the Pasha's own apartments, in a separate wing of the large rambling building.

I was agreeably surprised by hearing myself addressed in Persian by the old Pasha, an unusual accomplishment among the Turks, who rarely speak that language, although many understand it sufficiently to read the works of its most celebrated poets. Ishak Pasha is a gentlemanlike, agreeable man, be-

tween sixty and seventy; he wore the Europeanized dress which the present Sultan has not only introduced into all ranks of public officers, but has himself adopted. He made a great many inquiries concerning the causes of the Seraskier's disgrace, in which he felt particularly interested, since, in common with the Pashas of Kars, Moush, and Bayazeed, he is subject to the control of the Pasha of Erzeroum. He beckoned my "Tatar," Ibrahim, to come to his side, and made many earnest inquiries, in a low voice. Ibrahim, according to etiquette, knelt on one knee, and, at every question of the Pasha's, performed the Turkish salute, by touching his heart and forehead; yet, in spite of this ceremony, the "Tatar's" manner was very free and easy, and that of the Pasha familiar. These Cavasses are, indeed, privileged people, and in a country like this remote corner of the Ottoman empire, where news travels but slowly, the arrival of one of these government messengers creates quite a sensation.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Fortress of Van—Professor Schultz—Arrow-headed Inscriptions—Pasha's Apartments—Nestorians—Ibrahim's Impudence—Servants of the Pasha—Alchek—Long March—Kotoor—Cross the Persian Frontier.

The day was so wretched, and the streets so choked with snow and mud, that it was impossible to stir out. I should have wished to have visited the citadel, which is of uncommon strength, being, as I have said, erected upon the summit of a cliff, which rises abruptly from the plain, quite unconnected with any other hills; but difficulties are always thrown in the way of strangers who have not taken the precaution to procure an order from the Seraskier Pasha. There are several inscriptions in the arrow-headed character within the castle, and one on the face of the rock, upon the brow of which it stands.

It is said that an adventurous German Professor, of the name of Schultz, let himself down by ropes, and remained suspended in the air while he copied this last inscription.

Towards evening I was disturbed by a noise at the door of my apartments, and in rushed a troop of dancing boys painted and bedizened. I am no admirer of this buffoonery, and I quickly sent them about their business. After I had finished my dinner, which was sent from the Pasha's table, I received a message from him—that he would be glad to see me if I would take the trouble of coming over to his apartment. I obeyed the summons, and was ushered through several passages into a small and comfortable room adjoining the Harem. A crimson divan surrounded the room, and large tin plates, nailed against the wall, behind the hearth, reflected the cheerful rays of a large pine-wood fire. On the divan, beside the Pasha, were seated two of the beautiful long-haired cats for which Van is famous, with tails almost like a fox's brush.

I expressed my wish, if it were possible, to return to Persia by the way of "Joolamerk," but the Pasha assured me that, independent of the great danger of travelling among the "Hakkaris," a wild and lawless Koordish tribe who inhabit that district, the roads, at the present season, were perfectly impracticable. It was near Joolamerk that the unfortunate Professor Schultz, to whom I have already alluded, was murdered in 1829. It is said that the deed was done by one of the guides, whom the chief of the district had sent with him, and who shot him with his own gun while he was scrambling up a rocky bank in search of an inscription which the assassin pretended to point out to him. The reason which I had for wishing to visit Joolamerk was, that the mountainous country in its vicinity is the principal seat of the Nestorian Christians, or, as they call themselves, the "Kaldanis," a most interesting people, of whom I had an opportunity of seeing something subsequently at "Urumiah." The very

few Europeans who have succeeded in penetrating into their fastnesses, describe them as a succession of almost inaccessible valleys, shut in on every side by the most precipitous mountains. Thus foiled in my purpose, the only road open to me, if, indeed, it were still open, was that leading to the plain of Salmas, on the shores of the Lake of Urumiah. Having no longer need of Ibrahim's services, I dismissed him, and gave him letters for England, which he was to deliver to the British Consul at Erzeroum. I had found him a civil and obliging attendant, but rather inclined to be indolent, a very common failing of his class. Although I gave him a present beyond the stipulated sum which he was to receive from me, like all Asiatics, he thought he might as well see if my liberality would submit to any further calls, and, pointing to his coat, he begged to represent that it had been worn out in my service. With regard to the coat being worn out, the fact was unquestionable, but that ten days' jogging

quietly by my side should have caused its threadbare condition I begged leave to doubt. To do the fellow justice, he looked half ashamed to prefer his request. These Tatars are very expensive, but the advantage of their services more than counterbalances the additional cost, and on a road like that which I had just travelled, where an European is very rarely seen, they are quite indispensable. During the winter it is much safer to travel among the Koords than during the summer; for when the plains no longer afford pasturage for their flocks, they retire to their villages, leaving behind them the lawless, predatory habits in some degree inseparable from a nomade life. I also dismissed Khan Mahmoud's trusty follower, a lively rattling Koord, who had caused me much amusement by the way. He committed all sorts of extravaganzas, for which his constant excuse was—"I am not a man, but a Koord."

November 25th.—When I mounted my horse

at a little before noon, the court was crowded with servants who expected a present before my departure. One had spread my carpet, a second had lit my fire, a third had been the bearer of a message from the Pasha; then came the dancing boys and the singing boys, who had molested me the preceding evening; and lastly, an old grey-bearded Turk, who had the weighty charge of the harem. I modestly supposed that the claim of the latter functionary to a present must have arisen from the additional watchfulness required during the residence of a young "Ferenghi Bey" under the Pasha's roof. Of course it was impossible to satisfy all the numerous applicants.

The ground was covered with snow when I quitted Van, but the heavy clouds which threatened another fall blew over. This was most fortunate, for, as I subsequently experienced, a few inches more of snow would have materially impeded my progress. In five hours and a half I reached the village of

Alchek, situated near the shores of the lake of the same name, a small sheet of water not more than eight or ten miles in circumference. Shortly before reaching the end of our stage, I flushed a woodcock almost from beneath my horse's feet; after a flight of a few yards he alighted, but as all our arms were loaded with ball, he escaped with impunity. This was almost the first head of game that I had seen since quitting the Kabarda, if I may except a species of partridge which is found on stony ground, and which will frequently accompany the traveller for long distances, alighting on his very path and awaiting his approach.

November 26th.—From Alchek to Dilman, the Persian frontier-town, there was a choice of two roads. The one was a three days' march, each day of moderate length; the other only two days, but the first of thirteen hours, which, with deep snow on the ground, was almost more than we could hope to perform. Not a single habitation was to be

found on this latter road, nevertheless I determined to risk being benighted; and by a precaution which proved to be fortunate, I was in my saddle before three. The weather was most inclement, a snow-storm was raging without intermission, and the wind, catching up the lighter particles of snow, whirled them in eddies around us. Even had the faint light permitted us to search for our path, the driving snow had long effaced every track. I had a large escort with me, for this is one of the most dangerous portions of the road, owing to the depredations of the Koords, who infest this frontier with impunity, plundering alternately the Turkish and Persian villages, and taking refuge across the border. The old man who was the leader of my escort, led the way boldly across a broad plain, guided by the general direction of the hills. At every step our horses sank above their knees, and sometimes they would almost disappear in the ravines which intersect the plain, and which were now filled up with snow. When

the first rays of light enabled us to reconnoitre our position, we found that we had not wandered more than half a mile from our path. The old man had dismounted, and clearing the snow from a huge mass of rock which had detached itself from the hill, and rolled into the plain, he had spread his carpet, and was performing his morning prayer, holding the bridle of his horse in his hand. The storm had not abated; and as the old man knelt with his face turned in the direction of Mecca, he was exposed to all its fury. I would have given much to know whether he was sincere. For nine long hours we toiled through the deep snow without drawing bridle, and without seeing a single trace of man or of his works. There were formerly two or three villages in this district *, but they were so often exposed to the inroads of the

* Might not the following description from the pages of Xenophon, be applied with equal truth to the present day?—"Near this stream there were no villages, because of the incessant incursions of the Carduchi."—*Anabasis*, b. 4. c. 4.

Koords, that they were finally deserted by their inhabitants.

At noon my guide pointed out to me a little spring issuing from the side of a low, rocky hill, and I ordered a halt for breakfast. A tuft of high, withered reeds that grew by the fountain side, afforded sufficient fuel to boil the kettle; and our saddle-bags furnished the materials of a substantial breakfast. The old man performed his ablutions, and spreading his carpet on the snow, repeated his noon-day prayer. It was one when we resumed our march. Evening was closing in, when numerous tracks of sheep and cattle returning from their pastures, announced the vicinity of Kotoor. I was riding in front with a single servant, when a bend of the valley showed us, upon the opposite slope, what appeared to be a collection of huts. On a nearer approach, we found to our disappointment that they were large masses of rock, from whose shelving sides the snow had slipped away. One weary hour more, and the

blue curling smoke which arose from among stacks of fuel and forage, showed us the welcome termination of our long and tedious march. We forded the small river Kotoor, which runs at the foot of the village, and were once more within the Persian frontier.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Deep Snow—Plain of Salmas—Lake of Urumiah—Kolingi—City of Urumiah—American Missionaries—Nestorians—American Customs—Missionaries—Nestorius.

THE escort of the Pasha of Van quitted me at Kotoor; and as my muleteers were well acquainted with the road, I needed no farther guide. The snow lay so deep on the steep flank of the mountains, that it was with great difficulty that we made any progress. My little Arab, whom I had ridden every foot of the way from Erzeroum, was perfectly unable to extricate himself from the drifts with so heavy a weight upon his back, and I found reason to be glad that I had not parted with my large Turcoman, whom I now mounted. Towards evening we arrived at the fertile and well-cultivated district of Salmas, which lies between the lake of Urumiah and the

mountains of Koordistan. It is thickly studded with villages, inhabited chiefly by Armenians. The principal town of the district is called Dilman, and is the residence of the governor. I passed it at some distance to my left, and took up my quarters in a miserable village built among the ruins of an ancient Armenian city. On the face of the neighbouring mountains are some rude sculptures hewn out of the solid rock, apparently of great antiquity.

I found some difficulty in procuring accommodation of any sort, and was taught to appreciate the advantage of travelling with a Tatar by the slowness with which all my demands were now complied with. Fortunately, my muleteer was a native of the village, and he succeeded in procuring for me such provisions as the place afforded. On the following day, after crossing the plain of Salmas, and passing through numerous straggling villages with large but neglected gardens, we traversed successive ranges of

low hills, the snow at every step being less deep, until in about five hours we came within view of the lake of Urumiah. The first glimpse of the broad sheet of water was very beautiful. Towards the north-east, in the direction of Tabreez, rose a very bold chain of mountains, now clothed with snow; but to our right the shores were low, and every sign of winter had disappeared. Large tracts of swampy land, overgrown with tall reeds, intervened between the base of the hills and the shores of the lake. At our feet lay the small village of Kolingi, where I intended halting for the night, being half way between Salmas and the city of Urumiah.

The waters of the lake are so salt that no fish can exist in them: several large streams of bitter, brackish water flow into the lake from the northward, and it doubtless contains numerous subaqueous saline springs.

Soon after leaving Kolingi, we quitted the shores of the lake, and struck across the wide plain of Urumiah. The rich loamy soil

saturated with melted snow, rendered the road almost impassable. In summer this must be a beautiful country; and I have been told by many who have visited it in that season, that it reminded them of English scenery. The numerous villages are surrounded by orchards; and the rows of tall trees which line the banks of the brooks, by which the plain is intersected in every direction, give it the appearance of an enclosed country.

It was nearly sunset when I reached the gates of the city, which lies far from the shores of the lake to which it has given its name. I was received with the utmost hospitality by some American missionaries, who have established themselves at Urumiah within the last three years, and with whom I passed a few days most pleasantly. Their missionary labours are exclusively confined to the Nestorians, of whom there are many villages in the vicinity of the lake, although, as I have before mentioned, their principal seat is among the almost inaccessible moun-

tains of Koordistan, into which none of the missionaries have as yet succeeded in penetrating. Hitherto they have devoted the principal share of their time to the task of mastering the languages of the Nestorians: I say languages, because the written and the spoken Syriac are almost distinct tongues. They have made great proficiency, and are now able to instruct the children, who attend their school in great numbers. I regretted very much that I had not an opportunity of witnessing the result of their exertions; but during the few days that I remained under their roof, the children were all absent with their parents.

The mission consisted of four gentlemen, two of whom were clergymen, the third a medical man, and the fourth the superintendent of the printing establishment. All of them were married men; and their wives seemed to enter as zealously into the cause as they themselves. My having been in their native country was an additional passport to

their kindness; but in so remote a corner of the world as Urumiah, Europeans of any country could scarcely meet as strangers, much less descendants from the same stock.

Nothing could be more comfortable than their house, which, like all Persian palaces, consisted of several separate courts. In the interior they have adhered to their national customs; and at night, when the curtains were drawn, and the rocking-chairs placed beside the crackling Franklin stove, I could have fancied myself at New York or at Boston again. Their cookery too was American, and many a laugh we had over the buckwheat cakes, and the Johnny cakes, and the cold pumpkin pies.

It appeared to be quite a pleasure to them to talk over their own dear country with one who had visited it; and it was little less agreeable to me to recall to mind numerous scenes connected with pleasurable associations. In the course of conversation, I happened to mention that the loveliest spot

which I had seen in America was the little town of Northampton, on the Connecticut River, which proved to be the native place of one of the party present.

The missionaries were all of the Presbyterian church, and their service did not differ from that in use in Scotland. Morning and evening, the members of each household met for prayer, which was always extempore; and their cheerful piety was very pleasing to witness. Although religion very properly occupied a large share of conversation, there was a total absence of any thing like cant, nor was the subject intruded on their guests, unless they appeared to take an interest in it.

During my residence in the East, I have seen much of the missionaries of different nations, and am of opinion that the Americans are the best fitted for the arduous and trying duties which the missionary life entails. They are almost universally shrewd and energetic—necessary qualifications among Asia-

tics—at the same time that they are men, if not of high education, at least of much practical information and knowledge of the world. Add to this the most necessary of all requisites, an untiring zeal in the cause in which they have embarked.

At the table of my kind host, Dr. Grant, I constantly met a Nestorian bishop, who had been long an inmate of his house. In common with all the clergy of that sect, he had been early dedicated to the priesthood, and had, I believe, never tasted animal food. Besides this abstinence, peculiar to the clergy, two days of the week are set apart, and strictly observed by the Nestorians as fast days. They permit of no images or pictures of any description in their churches, and assert that the language used in their service is that which was spoken by our Saviour himself. The missionaries do not venture to hope for much improvement among the adult population; but the eagerness which many of the boys display to acquire information makes

them sanguine in their expectations of success among the rising generation. They have met with no difficulties of any description from the Persian authorities, who indeed, as long as no attempt is made to detach Mahomedans from their faith, make not the slightest objection to the efforts of missionaries among the Christian or Jewish portion of the population: on the contrary, they have experienced every civility at their hands, which they amply requite by their kindness to the sick and poor.

In the early ages the Nestorian creed was spread over a very large part of Persia and of Asia Minor. It derived its name from Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was condemned for heresy by the Council of Ephesus in 431. His doctrines were soon extirpated from the West, but took a deep root in the East. He was originally a monk of Antioch; and when he was banished from Constantinople, he took refuge there for some years. He subsequently retired to

Egypt, where he died. It is to be hoped that much historical information may be gleaned from the Syriac manuscripts of the Nestorians, of which they themselves say that they possess large collections in their convents. Their own traditions state them to have been a colony of Christian Jews, transplanted to Koordistan in the earliest days of Christianity.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Departure from Urumiah—Nestorian Wedding-Procession—A Row—Koordish Village—Disastrous Adventure—Shishawan—Malek Kossim Mirza—Ramazan—Mr. Merrick—Mahomedans.

On Monday, the 4th of December, I quitted with regret the little American colony, and resumed my journey to Tabreez by the southern shore of the lake of Urumiah. This road is but little frequented, being considerably longer than that which leads through Salmas, round the north-west angle of the lake. My host, and another of the gentlemen of the mission, accompanied me for some miles; and the governor of the province, on whom I had called the preceding day, sent one of his gholaums with me to procure quarters in the Koordish villages with which this district is almost exclusively peopled.

Within a few miles of the city we met a Nestorian wedding-procession: the brother of my acquaintance, the bishop, was bringing home his bride from her village: the lady was on horseback, gaily dressed, and closely veiled, while the bridegroom walked beside her horse, with his hand on the bridle. When they had arrived nearly opposite to us a scene of great confusion ensued: some former lover of the lady stepped boldly forward to assert his claim to her hand. Both parties quickly came to blows, and in the scuffle one of my servants was upset, horse and all, into a deep muddy ditch, from which we had some trouble in extricating him.

From the extreme flatness of the plain of Urumiah, the level of which is little higher than that of the lake, it appears as if the waters had once covered the whole of this tract up to the base of the hills which back the city. It was some hours before we reached the termination of the plain, after which our road skirted the shore of the lake. The

exhalations arising from the deposit on the beach were peculiarly offensive. I have heard as one reason assigned, that large flights of locusts are often blown into the lake and drifted in myriads to the shore.

My first day's journey was not a long one—only six hours. The few days' rest which my horses had enjoyed at Urumiah had been far from beneficial to them, and they now looked much thinner than at any other period of my journey. I have learnt from experience that the sudden transition from severe exercise to repose is always dangerous in the East, both to man and beast: an European is almost invariably ill at the termination of a long and fatiguing journey, although, had he been called upon to continue his exertions, he would have remained perfectly well.

The following evening I halted at the small Koordish village of Mahmoudieh, situated at the south-western extremity of the lake, which is, however, shut out from view by an extensive swamp, covered with high reeds. Round

the village there is very little cultivated land: for during the summer the inhabitants feed their flocks in the mountains, and merely visit the shores of the lake on account of the pasturage which is to be found there even during the winter. Notwithstanding their being only temporary habitations, I found the houses more comfortable than the quarters I had met with in Armenia. The people, too, were civil and attentive; and the produce of their dairies, under various forms, was brought to us by the women, who, according to Koordish custom, were unveiled.

On the morrow my gholaum, in spite of my reiterated cautions that he should take a guide from the village, insisted that he was perfectly acquainted with the road, and accordingly we started without one. Immediately after quitting the village we diverged from the beaten track, and entered the swamp by a narrow path, which, after some time, led us into a jungle of reeds which reached high above our heads as we sat on horseback. On

every side of us the ground was uprooted by wild boars, and occasionally we heard them rushing through the jungle, snapping the reeds before them. At length the path dwindled into a scarcely perceptible track, and the reeds grew so close and strong as nearly to force us out of our saddles. I was riding in the rear, when I heard a sudden plunge, followed by a cry. With some difficulty I urged my horse forward, and found myself on the brink of a deep and rapid river, into which the baggage-horses had plunged, and were vainly endeavouring to reach the opposite side. The precipitous and boggy banks afforded the poor animals no footing, and one of them was lying exhausted in the quagmire, into which he quickly settled so deep, that our united exertions failed to extricate him. It was with some difficulty that my own horses succeeded in remounting the bank from which they had plunged; and, after much exertion, we extricated one of the baggage-horses with his load. The other, in

his struggles, had broken the straps which bound his pack-saddle; and I had the satisfaction of seeing my carpets, my horse-clothing, and my dressing-case swept away by the stream. The old gholaum, through whose obstinacy this mishap had occurred, instead of bestirring himself, sat upon the brink of the river, crying and calling upon the Prophet and all the twelve imaums, and it required some self-command not to pitch him into the stream. In somewhat woful plight we retraced our steps toward our last night's quarters; men and horses were shivering and dripping; the surviving baggage-horse was staggering under the weight of the saturated travelling-bags, and the old gholaum brought up the rear moaning and groaning.

We halted at the very first village to dry our clothes, which otherwise would soon have been covered with a coat of ice. Everything that we most wanted was missing: halters and nosebags, coffee and coffee-pot, candles

and candlesticks: fortunately my journey was near an end, and I consoled myself for my small loss by the reflection of the narrow escape which my own horses had had of being drowned. The two following days were devoid of objects of interest, and the weather was extremely raw and cold. We crossed two rivers of considerable size, which empty themselves into the south-east corner of the lake, and passed through a district inhabited almost exclusively by Koords.

On the evening of the 8th of December I reached the village of Shishawan, the residence of Malek Kossim Mirza, a son of the late Shah, whom I had constantly met during my short stay at Tabreez in the summer of 1836. At that time he adopted the Frank dress, and, instead of a handsome Persian, had transfigured himself into a raffish-looking European. I remember meeting him at the ambassador's table in a blue surtout with large brass buttons, a coloured check-shirt, and a white cravat. In compliance with our

customs he had doffed the lambskin-cap, and his shorn head certainly did not improve his appearance. He had taught himself French, with some assistance from a Frenchwoman, who held the responsible situation of matron of the Prince Royal's harem, and spoke that language fluently. He had now turned his attention to learning English, and had persuaded Mr. Merrick, an American missionary, to spend a few months with him at Shishawan. Mr. Merrick, who had been sent to Persia with a view of ascertaining what might be done towards the propagation of the gospel among the Mahomedans, had accepted the Prince's invitation with the double view of studying the Persian language and character. At Urumiah I had learnt that at the present moment he was a guest of Malek Kossim Mirza; and, as I was desirous of meeting him, I despatched a servant to the Prince's villa to announce my approach.

It was sunset when I reached Shishawan, a small village standing on the eastern shore

of the lake. A few small sailing-boats rode at anchor near the beach, and formed the infant navy of the Prince, whose hobby at that time was navigation. In the open plain beyond the village stood the Prince's villa, a quadrangle enclosed within a high mud wall, above which a few leafless poplars reared their heads. I was received by the major domo, who welcomed me in the name of his lord, and ushered me into a small room, the comparative comfort of which showed that it was occupied by an European. The windows, indeed, were not glazed, and the feeble light was admitted through sheets of oiled paper, but a cheerful fire was blazing on the earth; and the unwonted luxuries of tables, chairs, and book-cases imparted to it a habitable appearance.

Here I found Mr. Merrick, but we had hardly exchanged greetings when we were joined by our host, who expressed his intention of dining with us. It was the month of Ramazan, during which, from sunrise until

sunset, nothing may pass the lips—not even a drop of water. When the Ramazan falls during the summer (for the Persian months are lunar), as the days are long and the heat excessive, this abstinence is severely felt, and children and invalids are exempted from a strict adherence to it. In the winter the privation is more easily submitted to; but, whatever may be the season, the gun which announces the close of day is anxiously listened for, and the *kalioun*, which, during the Ramazan, is also a forbidden pleasure, is instantly put in requisition. I had not hitherto been reminded that this month had commenced, for my servants were by no means strict Mahomedans; but the promptness with which dinner was served long before the usual hour of Eastern meals, showed that his long fast had sharpened our host's appetite. In Tehran, especially among the higher classes, the Ramazan is a season of more than ordinary debauchery. Night is turned into day, and spent in revelling and drunkenness, and

the sun is already sinking when the wassailers quit their couches ready to renew their nightly orgies.

Our host had formerly yielded deeply to the seductions of the wine-cup, but latterly, through the persuasion of Dr. Riach, he had renounced an indulgence which was undermining his constitution; and having, during a residence in Urumiah, made the acquaintance of the American missionaries, he had all at once become a zealous advocate of temperance societies. Some years ago an edition of Voltaire's works chanced to fall into his hands, and he became a disciple of that school of philosophy; but the late Shah, alarmed at some of the opinions which he professed, ordered him to commit the volume to the flames. To do him justice, his conversation was decorous and sensible, and I was quite astonished at the rapid progress which he had made in English, which he had only lately begun to study.

After dinner, when Malek Kossim Mirza

had left us, I had some very interesting conversation with Mr. Merrick. He mentioned to me that the Prince had opened a school for the children of his dependants, about which he had, for some time, been very eager, but his zeal was already beginning to flag, and some other fancy had seized upon his unsteady mind. Yet what good could be expected from any system of education established by a capricious and profligate man, half Mussulman, half Atheist! I fear that if Mr. Merrick ever expected to do any good, either with the Prince or his school, he must have been deceived by his own wishes.

It does not appear to me that anything can be done, at the present time, towards the diffusion of Christianity among the Persians, although it is evident that many of their religious prejudices are giving way, and that the doctrines of the Prophet have loosened their hold upon the minds of all classes. In my opinion it is not the bigotry of the Mahomedans which raises the chief obstacle to the

introduction of Christianity among them; but the deep and universal corruption of morals which must be overcome before they can receive a religion which enjoins so much purity and self-denial. The Persians are very fond of entering into religious discussions with Europeans, and conduct them not only with great quickness of argument, but, not unfrequently, with much apparent candour. A missionary should be thorough master of their language, and of his own subject, before he ventures to engage in a controversy in which, if foiled, his want of success will be attributed to the weakness of his cause, and not to his deficiency in advocating that cause. I have frequently heard Persians boast of having worsted in argument the well-known missionary Wolff.

The safest argument to be used in such a discussion, at least that which I have always found the most unanswerable, is to call their attention to the superior morality, integrity, and love of truth which characterize the

Christian, qualities which they not only observe, but involuntarily respect. On the other hand, the absence of all public worship (for the service which is performed on Sunday at the Embassy comes under the observation of but few) naturally enough leads many to doubt our possessing any religion. It is now generally acknowledged, among missionaries, that the improvement of the Christian population of these countries must be a preparatory step to the conversion of the Mahomedans.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A Vicious Horse—Calcareous Springs—Deh-Khargan—Arrival at Tabreez—News from Tehran—Progress of the Siege of Herat—Mahommed Khan Keraia.

On the following morning the Prince did not, of course, make his appearance. Mr. Merrick and I breakfasted together, and he then mounted his horse to accompany me a few miles on my journey. I must not omit to mention, as a very rare occurrence in Persia, that the servants of Malek Kossim Mirza refused the customary present when I mounted my horse. The morning was bitterly cold, and the wind blew fresh from the snowy mountains which intervene betwixt the lake and Tabreez. In passing through a small village, we overtook a countryman leading a horse, which he was taking to Tabreez, but which he feared to mount. My head servant,

a Koord, who was an excellent horseman, offered to ride him as far as his destination, an offer which the man gladly accepted. There was, however, a third party to be consulted, the horse himself, who, as soon as my servant attempted to saddle him, turned upon him, knocked him down, and, kneeling upon his chest, seized him by the arm, as if he would have torn him to pieces. With the greatest difficulty we rescued the poor fellow, who slunk away sorely discomfited. It is very rare to meet with a vicious horse in Persia, and it is quite wonderful, considering the crowds in which they are ridden, that so few accidents occur. The Arab horse is, generally speaking, gentle and docile, although high-spirited. Much may be attributed to the riding, and the old proverb is true which says—"After an Arab you will always find a horse pleasant to ride: after a Persian, sometimes: after a Koord, never."

Near the shores of the lake I stopped to examine a low, sloping bank, from which

several springs flow, which form a calcareous deposite, semi-transparent, like alabaster. From this spot large slabs are transported to every part of Persia, and used in the royal palaces for wainscoting the principal chambers.

The village of Deh Khargan, at which I halted for the evening, was one of the finest villages that I had seen in Persia. Those who travel only along the main roads have little idea of the thriving and wealthy condition of these more secluded districts. Very extensive gardens surround each house, and the village bazaar is well stocked with necessaries of every kind. In front of several houses were large slabs of stone, on which they were bruising, with heavy rollers of the same material, the seed of the castor-oil plant, which is universally used in this neighbourhood for lighting the dwellings of the poor.

Deh Khargan is in the rich and fertile

district of Maragha, once famous as the capital of Hoolakoo Khan, the nephew of Jenghiz, who, after desolating half Asia, fixed his abode there, and cultivated learning and science.

There now only remained eight farsakhs to Tabreez, and I rejoiced at the prospect of so soon meeting my friends again. I was early astir, and soon after noon I once more entered the gates of the city. It was Sunday, and the British ensign was flying from the roof of the Consulate: the sight of that little bit of bunting is always welcome to the eye of an Englishman in a strange and distant land, and I hailed it with unfeigned pleasure. I rode straight to my friend Dr. Riach's house, where I found that Colonel Sheil, the Secretary of Legation, had that very morning arrived from Tehran, on his way to England with despatches. From him I learned that events of importance had occurred during the last few weeks. A courier belonging to the

embassy had been intercepted on his return from Herat by some of the followers of the Shah's camp, which was then between Meshed and Herat. The man had been roughly handled, and his despatches taken from him, in consequence of which insult the ambassador, accompanied by all the Europeans at that time at Tehran, had quitted the capital and retired to the palace of Sulimaniah, one stage on the road towards the Turkish frontier, intending there to await an answer to his demand for satisfaction. However, after some days, he had yielded to the urgent entreaties of the principal authorities, and returned to the capital. I further learned that the Shah's army had made no impression upon Herat, and that there appeared no prospect of their bringing the siege to a successful issue. After some resistance, they had made themselves masters of the small mud fort of Goorian, which lies near the main road from Meshed to Herat, within a long day's march of the latter city. In their unskilful

attempts to throw shells into the place, they had overshot their mark, and dropped them into their own trenches on the opposite side of the fort; but at length they succeeded in making it too hot for the garrison, which then surrendered. The intelligence of the fall of Goorian had just reached Tabreez, and it was generally supposed that a few days more would bring the news of the fall of Herat, of which Goorian, by some strange ignorance, was said to be the key.

The strength of its fortifications, however, and the bravery and conduct of the Affghans, were destined to bid defiance to all the Shah's attempts. From the nature of its defences Herat may withstand, without injury, all the efforts of a powerful artillery, being surrounded by an artificial mound of earth, the massiveness of which inclines one to believe that the tradition which ascribes its construction to the hand of Alexander may be true. I have been informed by those who have visited Herat, that, upon coming suddenly

within sight of the city, it appears to stand upon a hill rising abruptly from the centre of the plain, so high is the embankment on the summit of which its walls are raised. This embankment is perpendicular on the inside, so that the town lies, as it were, in a well; but towards the plain it slopes at an angle of, perhaps, thirty degrees, and is defended by two lines of entrenchments, which are carefully traversed, and which communicate with the city by low passages through the body of the mound. At the foot of the embankment is a ditch, which may be flooded from the neighbouring river. The height of the embankment varies considerably. In one place I am told that the perpendicular drop, from the base of the city wall into the street below, is not less than twenty yards: so that even did the assailants succeed in breaching the wall and climbing the embankment, their difficulties would only have begun. It is to be hoped that either Colonel Stoddart, who was with the Persian camp during the greater

part of the siege, or Captain Pottinger, who was within the walls of Herat from the first gun that was fired until the retreat of the Shah's army, will publish some account of what came under their own immediate observation. The science and the dashing bravery displayed by the Affghans would surprise those who know that people only by name, while the patient endurance of privations which the Persian troops evinced could not fail to excite their admiration.

While in Tabreez a man was pointed out to me who was kept under a jealous surveillance, and not allowed to pass the city-gates. His name was Mahommed Khan, and he was the chief of a powerful tribe in Khorassan, renowned for his bravery and daring, but still more notorious for his wanton and atrocious cruelties. It is related of him that, being one day out deer-stalking, he had, after some trouble, succeeded in approaching almost within shot of a stag, when a poor villager, who had been gathering thorns on the plain

for fuel, and had laid him down to sleep beside his faggot, suddenly rose up and frightened the animal away. The Khan, in his fury, ordered the man to be bound hand and foot and laid upon his faggot, which the monster then commanded to be set on fire.

Another characteristic story was told me of the same man. While he was at the bath, the "dallak," or barber, who was attending him, represented to him his poverty, and his inability to provide for his numerous family. The Khan told him to make himself perfectly easy, for that he would provide for his children, and ordered him to bring them to him on the following morning. The man accordingly did so; and, in the hope of extracting more from his benefactor, he borrowed a few additional children from his neighbours for the occasion. When he made his appearance at the castle he found Mahommed Khan engaged in conversation with a Turcoman, and, to his dismay, saw the whole lot

disposed of to be carried into slavery. The Khan was, at the time I saw him, detained as a hostage for the good behaviour of his tribe, who might have harassed the army on its march through Khorassan.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Departure from Tabreez—Unfavourable Reports—Whirlwinds of Snow—Stumbling Horses—Excessive Cold—The Haji's Carts—The Shah's Cab—Dark Night—A Runaway Horse—Arrival at Tehran—Merry Christmas.

As another courier was expected in a few days with despatches for Colonel Sheil, which were to overtake him at the quarantine station on the Araxes, my kind friends persuaded me to await his arrival at Tabreez; and it was not until the morning of the 19th that I quitted that city, to perform the comparatively short distance which yet remained of my journey.

I had sent on my horses and servants by the usual stages, and travelled with post-horses, taking with me a single attendant. There only remained six days until Christmas, on which day I was anxious to be in Tehran; and, as the snow-storms are fre-

quently very violent at this season of the year, I had not allowed myself much time to loiter by the way. Soon after I had quitted Tabreez I met a courier of the embassy on his way to Constantinople. The man was nearly missing me in the grey of the dawn. We were in the middle of a vast plain, far from any habitation, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I could decypher the letters which he handed to me. Their contents were very unsatisfactory, and urged me to prosecute my journey with all possible speed. At every town, fresh rumours, all unfavourable to the English, greeted my ear; and I was positively assured by a respectable-looking horseman, that he had seen the ambassador and all the English Sahibs conducted as prisoners to the citadel.

Fortunately the horses at this season are in far better travelling condition than during the summer, and for the first two days we made good play; but, as we approached the high lands near Sultaniah, the snow became deeper

at every step. It was late at night when I reached this latter village, and finding my own people there, I indulged myself in a couple of hours' sleep. When I awoke the morning-star was rising, and the sky above my head was clear and bright, while a north-westerly gale swept the snow in whirlwinds across the plain, effacing every track. At each step our wretched horses sank up to their girths, and we were obliged to make frequent halts to allow the poor animals breathing time. Several wolves approached within a very short distance of the road, looking gaunt and fierce. We were the whole day performing a stage of thirty miles. My servant had noticed an eagle hovering over a little mound near the road-side, and on approaching the spot perceived a hare seated in the snow: he succeeded in killing her with his heavy Tartar whip, and while our horses were being fed, he served me up a savoury mess.

It was after nightfall when I remounted, and the stage of two-and-thirty miles seemed

interminable. I had a wretched horse, who fell several times upon his head with me, and would not even give himself the trouble of getting up again when he was down. My servant, according to custom, rode behind me to urge my horse forward; but the poor animal was chest-foundered, and whenever he attempted to quicken his pace he could not get his forelegs away, and invariably fell upon his head. I wanted to change with my guide, who was cantering on merrily before me, but he assured me that his horse was still worse: the fellow was sitting very far back upon a pack-saddle, without stirrups, and with only a rope in his horse's mouth. At length I reached the end of the stage, and was fortunate enough to procure a capital horse, who carried me into Casveen at an uninterrupted gallop. The sun was just rising as we entered the gates. The ruined caravanserai in which I had spread my carpet on my way up to Tabreez was almost choked with snow, which had drifted into every hole and corner; and

I sought refuge in the close and noisome stable, while my servant prepared me a cup of tea.

It is a common error in England to suppose that the climate of Persia is mild even during the winter season. I have been six winters in North America, and have never felt the cold so keenly there as I have in Persia. I do not mean to say that the mercury sinks as low, or even within twenty degrees of what I have seen it in New Brunswick; but the excessive heat of summer makes the body more susceptible to cold. The Persians themselves wear furs during the greater part of the year. The high plains of Armenia, many of which are six or seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, are exposed to the most dreadful snow-storms, as we learn from Xenophon's account of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand; and this is the principal reason of the inhabitants living underground. Ever since the first days of November winter had followed me with almost unabated rigour;

and those very spots, where five months before the heat had been the most intolerable, were now buried in deep snow.

In riding through Casveen I saw a large number of clumsy carts, which had been manufactured in different towns, for the purpose of carrying the provisions for the army, but, like most of the bright schemes of the Haji, this had failed when attempted to be put into practice. There are, as I have before remarked, no roads in Persia, excepting such as have been made by the constant track of baggage-cattle; and when, after making a couple of hundred of these awkward carts, an experiment was made for one day's march out of Tehran, the greater number broke down by the way.

The only wheel vehicles that accompanied the march of the royal camp, when I was with it in 1836, were a small phaëton belonging to the Russian ambassador, who, having been wounded in the leg, was unable to ride, and a venerable cab, in which the Centre of

the Universe was wont to travel whenever the road would permit, and about which I heard a good story from an English officer attached to the service of the Shah. One of the sons of the late Prince Royal, Abbas Mirza, inquired of my informant whether the King of England had such a carriage as that, pointing to the old cab; and, on being answered in the negative, appeared perfectly satisfied that no one but his royal brother could boast of so splendid a vehicle.

As I rode over the vast uncultivated and uninhabited plain at nightfall, I wondered at the security with which the traveller can traverse so thinly populated and so weakly governed a country, where robbery could so easily be committed with impunity. I had with me a single servant and the postillion, and we met several groups of horsemen, to whom the contents of my writing-desk would at that moment have been a prize worth snatching. The night was dark and rainy, and the postillion, accustomed as he was daily

and nightly to perform the stage, wandered from the track. For more than two hours we groped in vain for the road, deluded by the distant bark of dogs, first on one side and then on the other. Our jaded horses could scarcely stir, and fell several times in attempting to clear the small watercourses which intersected the plain. At length we stumbled upon a small village, and procured a guide to accompany us to Sangarabad, the last post before reaching Tehran. I threw myself on the raised platform at the extremity of the stable, and in a few moments was fast asleep. In less than an hour my servant awoke me: I drained a large bowl of strong tea, and mounted a little horse apparently unable to carry my heavy riding boots. I never remember being out on so dark a night: I really could not see my guide as he rode beside me. When we arrived at Sulimaniah we forded the river; and it was rather trying to the nerves to hear and feel, yet not to see the rapid stream rushing furiously along its

rocky bed. As soon as ever the first dawn of light appeared in the East I put spurs to my horse, and, to my astonishment and satisfaction, quickly discovered him to be a regular runaway. Both horse and rider being willing, the long barren plain was quickly crossed, and the first rays of the morning sun were gilding the peak of Demawend, as I galloped through the Casveen gates, right glad to have reached my journey's end. The luxury of a Persian bath, and a few hours sleep, made me forget all my fatigue; and the pleasure of again meeting my friends combined with the happy consciousness that my labours were achieved to render my Christmas a merrier one than I had thought to spend in Tehran.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Departure of the Ambassador for Herat—Wild-boar Hunt—Ruins of Verormeen — "Mirza Aboul Hassan Khan's Villa."

DURING the two first months of the new year I rarely passed the city gates. I was glad to leave off for a while the restless life which I had led the whole preceding year; and in my comfortable, well-stored library, the solitary hours passed quickly and agreeably. At the hospitable table of the ambassador I was always sure of a welcome as often as I felt disposed to seek society; and I generally availed myself of this privilege, unless the storm without, or some interesting book, tempted me to prefer my own fireside. Vague rumours and groundless reports were daily circulated in the bazaars regarding the state of the Shah's camp; and the "Begler Bey,"

or Governor of Tehran, found it no easy task, with the reduced garrison, to prevent the excited feelings of the inhabitants from bursting forth into open violence. Long intervals elapsed without the arrival of a courier from Herat; and, unless we received letters from some authentic source, it was impossible to depend upon the truth of any intelligence which reached us.* More than once we heard that Herat had fallen, and the guns were drawn up in readiness to fire a salute as soon as the long-expected news should arrive. One morning I was roused by a salvo of artillery, and never doubted that the place had at length fallen, till, to my joy, I learnt that it was the "Ide" or festival of "Beiram," which is always ushered in by a salute.

Early in March the ambassador quitted

* We once inquired of one of the Gholams of the embassy, whether an account which one of the King's couriers had just given us was likely to be true. "Oh, no," answered the man, "you must not believe a word of it. A courier *must* have something to tell by the way. You should hear what lies *I* tell when I am travelling."

the capital to proceed to the camp of the Shah, which at that time still lay before Herat. Together with several of the British officers attached to the Persian service I accompanied him for the first two stages, and we then turned off into the plain of "Verormeen," where we had made an appointment with "Jaffer Kooli Khan," the chief of a small tribe, to meet for a few days' boar-hunting. When we arrived at the place of rendezvous the "Khan" had not made his appearance; but before we had despatched our breakfast he joined us, accompanied by a score of wild-looking horsemen, some armed with rifles, some with the long bamboo spear. The Khan led the way across the plain to the bank of a small stream lined with a broad bed of tall dry reeds, and ordered some of his followers to fire the jungle. The breeze carried the flames rapidly onwards with a roar like that of the advancing tide, while a column of black smoke formed a canopy above our heads, which literally darkened the atmosphere. It

was a strikingly picturesque scene; and, as the flames approached the extremity of the jungle, the horsemen, eager for the chase, grasped their spears, and anxiously awaited the rush of the boar. At length, finding their lair too hot to hold them, three boars broke cover in gallant style, and took to the open country. We were on the wrong side of the brook; and, by the time we had approached within a hundred yards of them, they dived into a deep ravine, and disappeared from our view. With some difficulty we followed them, and the ravine dividing into several branches, I found myself alone. A sudden turn showed me a single boar, not, as I had fondly calculated upon, in full retreat, but trotting towards me, pursued by a couple of curs. I received him on the point of my spear, but the bamboo shivered in my hand, and his tusk rang against my stirrup. I felt my horse fail, and, looking round, saw the blood streaming from two deep gashes in his quarter. The boar had passed on; and the sharp crack of a rifle

behind me, quickly followed by several pistol shots, announced his fate. I gave my poor horse to a groom, and mounting a young Arab colt galloped to the scene of action. None of the bullets had touched a vital part, and the boar was still making head against the fierce attacks of his four-footed assailants. One of the Khan's retainers, a negro, had jumped upon his back, and was riding him somewhat in the fashion of Waterton and his cayman. It was a disgusting scene, and I was glad when it was voted to give up the pursuit of the other two. It was well that we did so, for it was already sunset when we reached "Verormeen."

We found that "Jaffer Kooli Khan" had very civilly vacated his own house for our accommodation, and that dinner was in a state of forwardness. A large wood fire was blazing on the hearth, and the cloth was spread upon the carpet in the centre of the room. When there is no need of ceremony, and you may seat yourself in any way which

you find most convenient, the practice of sitting upon the ground is far from uncomfortable ; and after the cloth was removed we reclined, in Roman fashion, upon our cushions, and the cup and the pipe went round while we talked over the adventures of the day, and settled our plans for the morrow. "Jaffer Kooli Khan" joined us in the course of the evening, and, to his credit be it said, resisted all temptations to indulge in the forbidden juice of the grape. He sang for us several rather pretty Persian ballads, and an Arab lullaby, a wild and plaintive air, which reminded us that it was time to seek our couches after our day's toil.

On the following day some of our party took up their guns, others, who had acquired in India a taste for hog-hunting, accompanied the Khan to a distant jungle in quest of a boar, while Dr. Bell and I preferred taking our sketch-books, and strolling to the adjoining ruins of Rhages. Some of these ruins are evidently of very remote antiquity, but

successive cities appear to have risen and fallen on the same site; and the massive structure of the more ancient buildings alone distinguishes them from the no less utter wrecks of subsequent ages. At a short distance from the ruined city stands the "Kaleh Erij," a quadrangular enclosure of about three quarters of a mile square, attributed by some to Seleucus, the successor of Alexander. The exceeding massiveness of the walls has resisted the hand of time, although the materials are not more durable than those now used in Persian architecture. Wherever they have been protected from the action of the atmosphere, the large square bricks of sun-dried clay have acquired almost the consistency of stone. If I remember right, the breadth of the walls is more than forty paces of solid brick-work. In the interior of the fortress, which is scattered with heaps of loose stones and broken tiles, we met a Persian in quest of hares, with several beautiful Arab greyhounds.

In the evening our sportsmen returned,

bringing with them the head of a hyæna; the boars had escaped them by taking to the hills, which were so steep that it was almost impossible to climb them on horseback. Our host had received a summons to proceed forthwith with all the horsemen he could muster, to escort a convoy of ammunition some days' journey, on its march to Herat, and we made our arrangements to quit "Verormeen" on the following morning, on our return to Tehran.

Being desirous of prolonging our absence from the dull, deserted capital, we ordered our servants to proceed with the baggage to a village only a few miles off, belonging to the "Elchee Bashi," or chief ambassador, as "Mirza Aboul Hassan Khan" is frequently called, from the distant and important embassies which he has filled. We ourselves followed them leisurely, spreading our line across the plain, that we might start any game which might be lying among the young wheat. Several sharp gallops after hares and

foxes beguiled the way, and it was noon when we reached the village of "Jafferabad."

A high mud wall, flanked by round towers, enclosed a space of some ten or fifteen acres, the greater part of which was laid out in gardens and vineyards, striped with long avenues of poplar. Near the gate stood the hovels of the villagers, between which we passed to the villa of the Khan. A dark and narrow passage conducted into a court, upon which several small unfurnished chambers opened. One long upper room looked out upon the gardens, and there we established ourselves during the day; but the evenings were still sufficiently cool to drive us to seek the comforts of the fireside in a less airy apartment. As I have before mentioned, there was no pretension to European luxury, or even comfort, in the old Khan's villa; and to one unacquainted with the simple apparatus of a Persian kitchen, the small recess, with its row of little brick fire-places, like those of a soldier's bivouac, gave little promise of the

excellent dinners for which "Mirza Aboul Hassan Khan" is famous.

In the evening a black minstrel made his appearance, whom Jaffer Kooli Khan had sent from "Verormeen" to enliven us. I am no great admirer of the Persian minstrelsy; it is more like recitative than singing, and the frequent shakes disguise the air, which is often sweet and plaintive. On the 17th we returned to Tehran, nor did we fail to commemorate the festival of St. Patrick, as well, at least, as such a festival could be commemorated in a land where whiskey was not to be had.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Moharrem—Astalak—Demawend—Firuzkoh—Hyrcanian Tiger—Palace of the "White Genius"—Surkh-robat—Zirab.

On the 4th of April I was again in my saddle, for the early spring and close of autumn are the only seasons when the beautiful but deadly shores of the Caspian may be visited with impunity. In the winter the mountain passes are choked with snow, while, in the summer months, a malignant fever is fearfully prevalent.

The call to noon-day prayers was resounding from the numerous mosques of the capital when we passed through the "Shah Abdul Azeem" Gate, and struck across the plain into the road to Firuzkoh. It was the holy month of "Moharrem," and in the open squares of the city theatres had been erected,

roofed in with canvass, wherein was daily represented the "Murder of Hassan and Hussein, the Sons of Ali." During the "Moharrem" the whole Mahommedan population seemed to have run mad. The men walked the streets day and night, with their vests unbuttoned, striking their breasts and vociferating "Hassan! Hussein!" "Hassan! Hussein!" while the women hurried from one theatre to another, to weep over the melancholy fate of the sons of "The Lion of God."

Some days before the commencement of the month I had received a message from the principal inhabitants of my "Mahalla," or quarter of the town, begging that I would lend them some chairs, and a suit of uniform for the Frank Ambassador, who performs a prominent part in the representation. They also requested that I would do them the honour of visiting their theatre on the day when that worthy was to figure on the stage, for the tragedy is divided into ten sepa-

rate acts, one of which is performed each day.

The theatre was gaudily decked out with hangings of every colour, and at either end stood a platform, rising in successive tiers, and loaded with huge bowls of every variety of sherbet. On the one side sat the men, wedged together as closely as possible, on the other the women, veiled from head to foot. A small avenue which divided them allowed of the entrance of the performers. The female characters who figured upon the stage were personated by boys. The dialogue was carried on in recitative, each actor holding in his hand a long scroll of paper containing his part, while the schoolmaster of the "Mahalla" hurried from the one to the other, prompting or changing the scroll. The stage consisted merely of a raised platform, occupying one end of the open space, without any contrivances for scenic effect. The dresses were poor and mean, and the whole outward show was little calculated to impress the mind, yet

SUMMER PALACE AND MOSQUE NEAR TEHRAN

the effect produced upon the audience was powerful. Not only did the women sob convulsively and beat their breasts, but I could see large tears chasing each other down the weather-beaten face of many a hardy muleteer.

We passed through one of these "takkias," or theatres, as we rode towards the city gates, and then, as I have already said, we struck across the plain into the Firuzkoh road. The day was cloudy, otherwise, even at this early season, the mid-day sun beats upon the plain of Tehran with a power unknown to the inhabitants of northern climes. Immediately around the city the large patches of young wheat looked refreshingly green, and the gardens were beginning to put on their summer garb. The fruit trees were covered with early blossoms, while the tall chunars were just unfolding their broad bright-green leaves. Beyond this narrow belt of vegetation the arid plain was relieved only by small groups of willow, dotted here and

there, and marking the site of the numerous water-mills erected on the banks of the small streams which flow from the hills of Shemeroon. It was nearly two hours before we lost sight of Tehran, and entered among the low hills which form the north-eastern boundary of the plain. A long and steep descent conducted us to the river "Jajerood," which we forded without difficulty, and ascended the opposite hill; another hour brought us to the small village of "Astalak." The sun had set, and the evening was closing in cold and stormy. My quarters did not boast the luxury of a fireplace, but the "kursi" was no bad substitute: over a deep hole in the floor, in which a fire is kindled, a short-legged table is placed, covered with a large quilt, which is drawn over you as you sit round upon the ground. At night I mounted one of the circular towers which flank the wall of the village, in the hopes of getting a shot with my rifle at a pack of wolves that were prowling round the gate, but at that moment some

greyhounds that I had brought with me broke loose and chased them towards the mountains.

The following morning was wild and stormy, and shortly after we had mounted the rain began to fall. Winter appeared to have returned: the corn, which in the plain of Tehran was already a foot high, here had scarcely raised its head above ground; the trees were as bare of foliage as in December, and large patches of snow lay by the roadside as we crossed an elevated ridge which looks down upon the city or village of Demawend. In ancient times it was a city of renown, where several of the fabulous heroes of Persia held their court, but little remains of its pristine splendour, save in the tradition of its inhabitants. The "Ked-khoda," or head man of the village, assured me that Demawend, if not the very first city erected after the creation, was undoubtedly the second. The city of Balkh contests the honour of seniority.

The weather had set in more rainy than I remember seeing in Persia: not a gleam of sunshine enlivened the dreary country through which we passed; and the rain fell almost without intermission, until we reached the village of Firuzkoh, on the 7th.

It was here that I first joined the Shah's camp in 1836, and the wide plain which lay at our feet, now thickly covered with corn-fields of the brightest green, presented then a very different aspect. At that time, parched by the excessive drought of a long summer, and trampled by thousands (I might say tens of thousands) of cattle, every sign of verdure had disappeared, and clouds of dust half concealed the long array of tents which stretched across the plain.

The village, a mere collection of mud hovels, lies at the foot of a remarkable cliff, which rises abruptly, and isolated from the bank of the "Habla-rood," and reminded me, for a moment, of the rock of Gibraltar. There still remained some hours of daylight, and I re-

solved to accomplish the ascent. It was no easy task, for the face which fronts the village is nearly perpendicular, and it does not need a long residence in the East to acquire some portion of the indolence of its slippered inhabitants. At length I reached the summit, and was leaning over the crumbling battlement of an ancient keep, almost equally inaccessible to friend or foe, when my attention was caught by a rustling sound immediately beneath me, and I saw a large panther, if indeed it was not one of the tigers for which the neighbouring woods of Hyrcania were famed in days of yore, steal from some low bushes at the foot of the wall and leap over the parapet. I descended hastily to the spot, but a thousand natural caves in the rock offered him a shelter, and I could discern no traces of him. I had disturbed him at his repast, for the carcase of a newly-killed fox lay hidden in the thicket. Had not the night been threatening, I would have kept a mid-

night watch, on the chance of his returning to his unfinished meal.

April 8th.—Contrary to my anticipations, the morning was beautiful: not a cloud was to be seen on the horizon, and the gale had subsided into a gentle breeze. We skirted the edge of the brook in quest of wild fowl, and I recognised the bend of the stream where our little English encampment had stood. The sight of that spot awakened many recollections not altogether pleasant. A little farther an elevated mound marked the site of the Royal Pavilion.

We ascended a mountain-pass of inconsiderable height, and looked down upon Mazanderan. As yet we saw none of that luxuriant vegetation which characterizes the provinces bordering on the Caspian. The mountains were not indeed so bare and steril as those of "Irak," but their sides were thinly clothed with thorns and junipers, interspersed with stunted, unhealthy-looking

oaks. Within half a mile of the summit of the pass, a plot of turf by the side of a brawling mountain-stream reminded me of breakfast, and sending the baggage forward, we halted for an hour, and then pursued our journey leisurely, having only four farsukhs to perform, and the whole day before us. Our path led sometimes on the brink, and sometimes through the bed of the "Talar," here an insignificant stream, but increasing every mile by the tribute of numerous mountain-torrents.

We passed through a curious defile, evidently formed by the action of the water: the high and perpendicular walls of rock, forcibly riven asunder, are crowned by the ruins of the palace of the Deev-i-Sefeed, or white genius, who was vanquished and slain by the renowned Rustam. In the fabulous history of Persia, Mazanderan is famed as the seat of a race of "Deevs," or genii, of whom the most wonderful tales are related. We halted for the night at Surkh-Robat, which consists

only of three or four miserable hovels with high sloping roofs, the substitution of which for the terraces general throughout the rest of Persia, is rendered necessary by the violent periodical rains of Mazanderan. Our next day's journey was delightful. The sun shone forth with undimmed brilliancy, but a gentle breeze tempered the force of its rays: the landscape increased in beauty at every step. The narrow defile through which our yesterday's path had wound gradually widened into a broad and richly-cultivated valley, the mountains on either side wooded to their very summits; and the vale, wherever uncultivated, presenting a succession of sloping lawns of the smoothest and most verdant turf, studded with thickets of hawthorn, and groups of forest-trees. All our party seemed to feel the exhilarating effects of this lovely scenery: the greyhounds gambolled and chased each other among the thickets, while the horses longed to exchange their dull measured pace for a gallop on the elastic greensward.

It was late when we halted for breakfast. We had passed a hundred lovely spots, each of which the day before would have appeared a paradise to me, but every step disclosed new beauties which lured me onwards. At length I halted where a sparkling rivulet, emerging from the deep shade of the forest, bounded in a series of Lilliputian cascades down a little glen, at the foot of which flowed the Talar, a broad and rapid stream, which earned its title of "Golden" by the same property which conferred upon the Tiber its epithet of "Flavus." A clump of venerable beech offered me a shady retreat, but the heat was not oppressive, and I preferred having my carpets spread upon a sloping bank which overhung the river, and commanded a view of the whole extent of the valley. Here and there spurs from the mountain-range, like buttresses of a gigantic wall, projected far into the vale, while at other points the latter, as if in retaliation, receded from its usual limits, and formed, as it were,

deep bays in the mountain-side. The southern extremity of the vale was bounded by the lofty range which separates Mazanderan from Irak, on the summit of which the snow still lingered. A few small hamlets lay scattered on the banks of the stream. Large flocks ranging over the undulating pastures, and numerous strings of mules carrying rice and oranges to the capital, imparted to the landscape that air of life which so much enhances the charm of rural scenery. The Mazanderanis are a fine hardy race, of a deeper bronze than the inhabitants of the northern provinces of Persia, and distinct from them in manners as in language.

The country around Zirab, where we took up our quarters for the night, was almost under water, as its name implies: for at this stage of its growth the rice requires complete irrigation.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Shah Abbas's Causeway—Mazanderan Roads—Vegetation on the Shores of the Caspian—Aliabad—Jackals—Sari—The Eelbeggee—Boar-Hunt—Bay of Ashraff—Sefiabad.

SHAH ABBAS the Great, the munificent founder of mosques, colleges, bridges, and caravanserais, to whom Persia is indebted for almost every building which attracts the eye of the stranger, constructed a broad and massive causeway through the almost impenetrable forests of Hyrcania. His successors have allowed it to fall into ruin, like every other of his great works, and consequently the roads of Mazanderan are at some seasons of the year totally impassable. Even under the most favourable circumstances they are atrociously bad. Winding through the heart of forests almost impervious to sun and wind, and watered by innumerable springs, they

are never dry, and in many spots quite under water, which converts the rich and fertile soil into the deepest and most tenacious quagmires. The steep passes by which the traveller descends from the high plains of Irak to the low shores of the Caspian resemble roughly-hewn flights of steps; for the long strings of mules, invariably treading in the steps of their leader, have not only formed alternate ridge and furrow in the soft clay; but, where beds of sandstone cross the road, they have excavated deep and regular stairs. In many places the Sefaveean causeway is still of benefit to the traveller, but in others it is quite the reverse, for the chasms which intervene between the masses of uprooted pavement engulph your horse's feet beyond his power of extricating them. Owing to his superior length of pace, the horse is far less safe and comfortable to ride in Mazanderan than the mule, who knows instinctively where he may place his foot in safety; but the latter frequently consults his own convenience more

than that of his master by plunging into some tangled brake to avoid the quagmire. To the infinite amusement of my cavalcade, my cook, a heavy Armenian, was fairly lifted off his mule by a projecting bough, and softly deposited in the plastic clay.

The day was pleasant, but the Bad-i-Kabout, or grey wind, a sort of Scotch mist, deprived the rich and varied woodland scenery of the effect of light and shade. It is impossible to imagine a more luxuriant vegetation than that of Mazanderan: exposed alternately to heavy and refreshing rains, and to the vivifying influence of an Eastern sun, the naturally rich soil throws out in profuse abundance every form of vegetable life. The tall forest-tree shoots up to a noble height; the vine twines itself around its loftiest branches, and falls again to the ground in graceful festoons, while beneath its fostering shade flowers of every hue weave a carpet of the brightest colours. Even decay loses its usual mournful appearance, for moss and ivy

clothe the withered trunks, and conceal the progress of the worm. Without dismounting from my horse, I could pluck handsful of primroses and violets from the overhanging banks.

We had now entered upon the broad low tract of land which stretches from the shores of the Caspian to the base of the range of hills which runs parallel with the coast, at a distance of from six to twelve miles, and we halted for the night at the village of Aliabad. Being unable to procure any accommodation in the village, I rode to an adjoining "Imam-zadeh," and claimed the hospitality of the holy man over whose ashes the building is erected: the gateway was an open chamber exposed to all the winds of heaven; but the night was fine, and I ordered my couch to be spread there. My servants bivouacked within the enclosure, and made a watch-fire of huge blocks of timber.

Scarce a breath of air was stirring, and a few light fleecy clouds flitted slowly across

the moonlit sky. The little temple stood out in bright relief against a clump of gloomy cypress, and in the foreground a group of tall ash trees flung their shadows across the closely-shorn turf. Behind me lay the village of Aliabad, imbedded in wood, and in the far-distance the eye rested upon the heavy bank of cloud which hung above the Caspian.

About midnight I was awakened by an unearthly yell, which made me spring involuntarily from my couch; a few smouldering embers alone remained of the expiring watch-fire, and jackals, singly or in pairs, were skulking among the tombstones immediately beneath me. At times a distant bark was heard from the forest, which was quickly answered by every jackal within hearing, like the challenge of a chain of sentries. It was not indeed a bark, but a mournful cry, like that of some human creature in an agony of pain. Sleepy as I was it was long before I closed my eyes again.

On leaving Aliabad we were forced to quit the broken causeway, which led in a long straight line through the heart of the forest, and to follow a winding path which buried itself in the recesses of the wood. Our cattle at every step sank above their hocks, and in four hours we had not accomplished an equal number of miles. Beneath the shade of the tall elm and ash, the box tree, of a height to which I have never seen it reach elsewhere, formed an almost impenetrable jungle, and afforded a safe retreat to the wild beasts with which these forests still abound.

It was with difficulty that some of our poor baggage-cattle reached the gates of "Sari," the capital of Mazanderan, said to be the ancient Zadra Carta visited by Alexander in his campaign against the "Mardi." As may be inferred from the difference existing between the villages of Mazanderan and those of the other provinces of Persia, Sari resembles no town of these drier and more local districts. At some distance its houses have

an European look, and reminded me of the Ionian Islands. They are mostly of kiln-dried brick, with high sloping tile roofs, and stand singly in groves of orange-trees, which at this season were heavily laden with fruit. Sari is surrounded by a dry ditch and an embankment, flanked by a few tottering hexagonal towers.

The governor of Mazanderan, "Ardisheer Mirza," or Prince Artaxerxes, a half-brother of the Shah, had lately removed to the town of Balfurush; and I took up my quarters in his empty palace, which stands without the gates, at the far end of an extensive garden or orange grove. The interior of the quadrangle contains a spacious basin, where myriads of frogs kept up an incessant croaking. This palace is of modern date, and was constructed by an uncle of the present king, who held the government of the province for many years, but now resides in disgrace at Hamadan. It has, however, been so neglected, that, after searching every nook and corner in

quest of some habitable room, I ordered my carpets to be spread in a large and lofty hall, whose clumsy, unglazed window-frames admitted the chilly evening breeze in heavy gusts. Large trays of sour oranges, sufficient to have supplied half the theatres of London, were brought to me by the Prince's retainers, in hopes of a present, and my wretched accommodation bid fair to cost me dearer than the most expensive hotel of Paris or London.

On the morrow, at an early hour, the "Eelbeggee," or chief of the wandering tribes, to whom I had sent a message the preceding evening, expressing my wish to hunt the wild boar, attended at the palace. He was a weather-beaten old sportsman, mounted on a cross-made rough-and-ready horse, and furnished with a sword and spear; while his attendants, all on foot, were armed in true Hyrcanian fashion, with massive clubs. The jungle reaches to within an hundred yards of the city walls, and a motley pack of curs of every shape and breed having been hallooed

into the thicket, the battue commenced. The Eelbeggee and I skirted the cover side, grasping our spears in the hopes of a boar taking to the open country.

After awhile we dismounted, and, holding the bridle in our hands, we sat down on a commanding knoll, and fell into conversation. "You have a fine country," said I to the old man, "plenty of wood and water, with abundance of fish and game." "Yes," answered my companion, "it is a fine country, but you have omitted the greatest advantage it possesses;" adding in a low and mysterious tone, "We have remarkably fine women in Mazanderan." At this interesting point of the conversation a yelping of curs, succeeded by the quick report of a rifle, gave notice that the game was afoot. We sprang into our saddles and gallopped in the direction of the sound, through a tangled thicket, which at times threw my horse upon his haunches, and tore my shalwars, or riding trousers, into shreds. But ere we had reached the scene of action

the boar lay weltering in his blood. We next beat a narrow strip of low underwood which skirted the banks of a sluggish but treacherous stream, and in a few moments an enormous boar, as black as jet, broke cover on the opposite side. The Eelbeggee attempted to cross the brook, but his horse sank up to his girths in the marsh, and could neither advance nor retreat. I had by this time seen enough of the sport, and turned my horse's head homeward.

To the Mahomedan, the flesh of the wild boar is of course unclean; but some of these tribes, which are mostly of Koordish origin, are rather lax in their observance of the ordinances of their religion, and the carcases of our victims were quartered and divided among the hunters. The meat of Mazanderan is much finer than that of the plains, owing to the richness of its pastures: the large herds of cattle which roam at will over the mountain's side, are such as our Cheshire farmers would be proud of; while the lean starveling

cow of Irak is smaller even than the Alderney. The sheep of Mazanderan are quite a different breed from those of the other side the mountains. The latter are large, and carry their fat in their tails; while the former are light and active, like those of the Welsh hills. Very little corn is grown in this province, and, for the three days before I arrived at Sari, both we and our horses had to take to rice as a substitute for our usual food.

The day was one of those soft grey days which leave no room to regret the absence of the sun. The atmosphere was unusually clear, and when I turned my horse's head towards the city, I discovered new beauties in the already beautiful landscape. To the south of Sari a noble range of mountains, which since our descent into the level country had been veiled in mist, was now distinctly visible, the higher crests still tipped with snow. The wooded hills which I had till now supposed to be the limit of the prospect, now shrank into comparative littleness, and their

rounded summits looked tame contrasted with the ragged outline of the distant chain.

The scenery of our next day's march was more than ever English. After crossing the river "Tejin," by a long and handsome bridge of seventeen arches, Shah Abbas's Causeway wound through alternate wood and pasture, narrowing at every step, until at length the high hedges interlaced their branches above our heads. The hawthorn was in full blossom, and though less sweet than the jessamine, which when last I visited the shores of the Caspian festooned from every tree, its fragrance perfumed the air.

We halted to breakfast on a low hill beside the road, halfway betwixt Sari and Ashraff. I had not finished my meal when I was roused by a shout from my people, and, looking round, saw five boars cantering across the ridge of the knoll upon which we were seated. They dashed into the jungle which lay below me, and in a few moments I saw them scampering across the irrigated rice-grounds on the

opposite side. A single hound had kept them in view, and, for a few moments, succeeded in bringing three of them to bay, but the jungle was impassable, and we could not move to his assistance.

We resumed our journey, and in two hours more a sudden bend of the road brought us within sight of the Caspian, or rather of the Bay of Ashraff, which is divided from the sea by a long low neck of sand, which stretches far across to the eastward. The bay is shallow and discoloured, and the long track of low marshy ground which reaches to the shore made me for a while incredulous of the vaunted beauty of the site of Ashraff.

My disappointment was, however, of short duration. We climbed the steep winding-path which conducted us to the palace of Sefiabad, and the view which greeted our eyes exceeded all my expectations. The sun was setting in an angry sky, and its last rays fell in partial streams upon the rich wood-

lands and the wide expanse of deep blue water which lay beyond the isthmus.

I had only time to take a hasty survey, for the palace was in ruins, and the numerous fountains and reservoirs were empty and grass-grown. We therefore descended to the town of Ashraff, and sought a shelter in the more modern palace of the great Nadir.

CHAPTER XL.

Ashraff—Mazanderani Connoisseurs—View from Sefiabad—Sefaveean Palaces—The Grey-Wind—Shah Abbas the Great—Kara Tuppeh—Shores of the Caspian—Ferah-Abad—Salmon-fishing.

ASHRAFF was once a city of great extent, but since the accession of the reigning family it has been deserted, and, at the present day, it forms a scattered hamlet. Its lovely site is well worthy of the residence of a court; but the difficulty of access, and the unhealthiness of the climate, are serious drawbacks. During the long reign of Fatteh Ali Shah I believe that he only visited Ashraff twice, and the present king has hitherto been too intent upon his warlike expeditions to visit any portion of his dominions. In the days of the Sefaveean monarchs Ashraff must have been a city of palaces; perhaps it is not less

beautiful in its fallen state. We entered the garden of Nadir's palace by a ruined gateway, and, traversing a succession of terraces thickly planted with orange-trees, and lined with avenues of magnificent cypress, we reached the dilapidated palace which fronts the Caspian. My carpets were spread in an upper chamber, from which I could catch an occasional glimpse of the distant sea between the waving branches of the cypress, and my horses were picketed in the orange-grove beneath my window.

April 14*th*.—For the first time since my arrival in Mazanderan, as if waiting for an occasion worthy of his splendour, the sun rose in an unclouded sky, and I am ashamed to say that I was awakened by the beams shining full upon my pillow. I reproached myself with having allowed him to rise before me, for I grudged every moment of sunshine; and, ordering my servant to prepare breakfast for me at the palace of Sefiabad, I sallied forth with my sketch-book. A narrow wind-

ing path, half choked with brambles, led through the deserted and neglected gardens, neglected only by the hand of man, for the orange-trees were bending beneath their golden burden, though none was there to reap the harvest, and the fruit lay rotting on the ground. I reached an opening in the wood which overlooked the ruined pile, and sat me down to sketch. Two Mazanderani wood-cutters seated themselves beside me, much puzzled to discover my occupation. "If the Moollâh of Ashraff were here," said the one, "would he be able to read that?" pointing to my sketch. "Of course not," answered his companion: "cannot you see that it is written in the Frank character?" After these connoisseurs had left me, I scrambled through the wood to the palace, where I found breakfast ready spread upon the small terrace fronting the principal entrance.

Sefiabad is quite unworthy of its magnificent situation, being a formal, square, brick building, unadorned by any architectural em-

bellishment. The centre is occupied by a spacious octagonal chamber, in the midst of which is a large stone fountain; a steep winding stair at each corner conducts to a few small upper rooms. The whole building is only seventy feet square, and stands upon a terrace of small area, occupying the crest of a hill which projects from the chain which runs parallel with the Caspian, at a distance of from six to eight miles from the shore. The faces of the palace front the four cardinal points. To the north the eye hurries over the level marshy shore to rest upon the mirror-like surface of the Caspian, unruffled by a breath of air, unchequered by a single sail. Not even a solitary fishing-boat was to be descried along the vast extent of coast which lay before us.

Looking to the east, the landscape is one of almost unrivalled beauty: successive ranges of lofty mountains, wooded to their very summit, rise one beyond the other, coloured by distance with a deeper and more hazy blue,

till the faint outline is scarce perceptible against the sky. Between their base and the still waters of the Caspian lies the dense forest, chequered here and there by patches of cultivation surrounding the straggling villages, whose high-pointed roofs of bright red tiles peer from among the varied foliage. At the foot of the hill, on a gentle acclivity, stand the ivy-mantled walls of the Sefaveean palaces, half buried among groves of funereal cypress, fitting emblems of their departed glory.

Evening was drawing nigh before I left this enchanted spot, with slow and unwilling steps. I could hear the heavy flight of the pheasants returning from the corn-fields, and the woods resounded with their crowing. All nature seemed alive. What a contrast to the dreary plains of Irak, where the grey lizard is almost the only living creature that meets the eye!

April 15*th*.—Easter Sunday, and another heavenly day. When I awoke there was a heavy mist, which soon dispersed, and left the

landscape fresher and more beautiful than before. After breakfast I explored the various courts which the fair ladies of Abbas's harem once enlivened with their presence. Nothing was wanting that could delight the senses: shady terraces, sparkling fountains, luxuriant orange-groves: it was a cage worthy of such pretty captives.

Pursuing my ramble, I stumbled upon a picturesque old ruin almost hidden in the wood. At the first glance it reminded me of Kenilworth, a building probably of the same century, for Abbas was contemporary with Elizabeth; but the favourite of the Island-Queen was lord of a more princely mansion than the Safaveean monarch with all his boasted magnificence. In the centre of the palace, beneath a dome inlaid with blue porcelain, was a spacious reservoir supplied either by a spring, or, more probably, by an aqueduct from the adjoining hill; for from each corner flowed a copious stream, conducted in stone channels though the garden. Gigantic ivy-

trees had protruded their branches through the fissures of the wall and detached huge masses of solid masonry, while wide-spreading fig-trees had taken root in every part of the building, excluding the light of day with their thick foliage.

I counted no less than five or six distinct palaces at Ashraff, all of the same era; that in which I had taken up my quarters is of a subsequent period, having been built by Nadir Shah on the site of one which was consumed by fire. It is of the same order of architecture which is at the present day prevalent throughout Persia, only with the addition of the sloping roof, which is indispensable in Mazanderan.

Soon after noon the sun suddenly withdrew his rays, and the cheerless, rheumatic grey-wind drove me within doors. How the whole scene changed in a few moments! Sea and sky became of one dull grey, the cypress looked more than ever sombre and funereal,

and the croak of the frogs sounded harsher and more dismal. The wind whistled through the tenantless halls; and the jackals fancying that the sun had set, commenced their nightly howling. I could see them creeping stealthily among the orange-trees, alarmed at the unusual apparition of a stranger in the deserted halls of Ashraff.

At noon I was resolved to remain another day at Ashraff, but the "Grey Spirit of the Caspian" damped my resolution, and I ordered my horses to be in readiness at break of day.

Abbas the Great is well known to all as the brave but ruthless conqueror, and as the liberal and munificent promoter of every work of national advantage. His domestic history, which is less generally known, forms a tissue of horrors such as the Greek tragedians would have ascribed to the agency of the avenging fates; and, amid the luxurious shades of Ashraff, the aged monarch, who sought in

vain in nightly orgies the blessing of forgetfulness, must have envied the lot of the meanest of his oppressed subjects.

April 16th.—When we mounted our horses, a drizzling rain was falling, and the dull leaden sky threatened a long continuance of bad weather. Yet it was not without regret that I turned my back upon the enchanting scene, where I would gladly have lingered awhile longer. Passing through the humble bazaar of Ashraff, we traversed a narrow belt of wood, and emerged upon the low sedgy plain, which stretches to the sea-shore. At every step our horses sank above their knees; and the mist was so dense, that our guide could scarcely shape his course across the pathless swamp. A gradual improvement took place both overhead and underfoot; the clouds began to break, and the marsh gave place to extensive pastures of elastic turf, interspersed with low patches of copsewood, from which I started several jackals, one of which I succeeded in killing with my greyhounds.

At about eight miles from Ashraff we passed beside the small village of "Kara Tuppeh," or the black mound, curiously situated upon a low hillock, which stands alone in the midst of the wide level plain. On the summit of the mound stands the shell of a palace erected by "Aga Mahommed Khan;" but why, in a country abounding in picturesque situations, the Eunuch-king should have chosen so dreary a site I do not understand. For miles around not a tree or shrub was to be seen. Soon after passing Kara Tuppeh, we forded a deep river; and at five hours from Ashraff, the forest glade, which we had followed for some miles, opened upon the sandy beach. The Caspian, as if desirous to vindicate its right to the title of sea, dashed in heavy breakers upon the shingle, and the shore was alive with myriads of sea-fowl of every description. Near the beach the water was discoloured, but beyond it was of a deep transparent green. With the exception of the common cockle, there was not a shell to

be seen. The water was merely brackish: I have often been obliged to drink from much less palatable wells in the interior of Persia.

We rode along the sands for several hours, until we arrived within two miles of Ferah Abad, and then turned into the wood, which at this point almost overhung the water. We shortly reached the banks of the broad and rapid Tejin, on the opposite bank of which are the ruins of another Sefaveean palace. A little higher up the stream, beside the fallen arch of a massive stone bridge, a flat-bottomed ferry-boat transported us across; and we fixed our quarters in a less splendid, but more comfortable mansion than those we had of late inhabited. Immediately before our windows the river swept abruptly round the foundations of the old palace, forming a series of eddies, in which I could see the salmon leaping almost out of water. My arrival was a signal to the fishermen to unmoor their log canoes; and it was not long before a noble fish, of nearly twenty pound weight, was

safely landed on the bank. I had with me only a trout rod, and very indifferent tackle, so I preferred watching the sport. In less than an hour, more salmon were landed than we could have consumed in a week.

CHAPTER XLI.

Russian Fishery—Sail on the Caspian—Packet from England —Babul River — Meshed-i-Ser—Balfurush—The Island Palace—Ardisheer Mirza—Persian Andarun.

April 17th.—I WAS up and stirring before the sun, and followed the course of the Tejin till it empties its discoloured waters into the Caspian. The morning was like that of a fine spring day in England; the heavy dew-drops which hung upon every brake and thicket glittered in the first sunbeams, and the light, transparent vapour which arose from the rank vegetation floated above the mass of foliage. Not a breath of air was stirring, and the stillness was broken only by the singing of birds and the measured ripple of the waves. There was a freshness in the smell of the hawthorn and the wild flowers,

which was quite delicious. I ordered breakfast to be prepared beneath the shade of a tall ash-tree which bent over the river, and in the mean time I enjoyed the luxury of a long swim in the Caspian.

While one of my men was collecting dry sticks for the fire, he discovered a pheasant's nest, in which were nine fresh-laid eggs, which I succeeded in carrying safely to Tehran, and rearing under a hen. After breakfast I visited the Russian fishing-station, which lies on the left bank of the Tejin about half a mile from its mouth. I was guided to the spot by the sight of numerous vultures perched upon the surrounding trees, waiting impatiently for night to batten upon the refuse of the fishery. One of these disgusting creatures, more greedy than his comrades, had alighted by the water-side close to the station-house, and could scarcely raise himself from the ground as we scared him from his prey. The Russians have the monopoly of sturgeon-fishing in several of the rivers of

Mazanderan and Ghilan, and export immense quantities of caviare from thence to Astracan. The director of the establishment, an Armenian, informed me that the average number of fish taken daily in the Tejin, during the spring, amounted to between six and seven hundred; and, judging from the morning's haul, their weight varies from thirty to sixty pounds. A fresh boat-load had just arrived, and the fish were ranged in rows along the bloody floor. A bearded Russian, armed with a broad shining axe, passed along each line, dealing death at every blow. The roe was next carefully taken out and packed in casks; but every part of the fish was made some use of.

The director offered me the use of a boat, and I sailed out to two Russian brigantines, which lay at anchor between three and four miles from the land. I boarded one of them, to see the way in which the fish were packed. After witnessing the process, it would require a Russian stomach to eat salt sturgeon. The

fish were ranged in layers in the hold, covered with salt, which looked like mud when trampled down by the bare feet of the filthy-looking crew. A most unsavoury smell arose from the hatchway, and, civilly declining an invitation from the skipper, who looked like an Esquimaux, to drink a glass of brandy in his cabin, I descended the side, and we made sail for the shore. I was not prepared for the view which met my eye as we flew before the sea-breeze which had now set in: the conical peak of Mount Demavend towered high above the numerous ranges of mountains which rose one above the other, more bare and rugged as they receded from the low shores of the Caspian. It could not have been less than 60 or 70 miles distant in a direct line.

I did not return to my quarters until sunset, and scarcely had I seated myself to my dinner when I was gladdened by the welcome apparition of a messenger from Tehran, with a large budget of letters from England. It

is necessary to have felt the pain of a long separation from every friend, to understand the joy which the receipt of letters from home gives to the wanderer in an Eastern country, where every object that surrounds him is as strange to his feelings as to his eye.

On the morrow I quitted Ferahabad. The usual track is along the heavy sand of the sea-shore; but after a while I crossed a low range of sand-hills, which ran parallel to the coast, and found myself in an extensive plain of rich pasture-land, partially overgrown with low copsewood. To my left, and within a few hundred yards of the sand-hills, flowed the broad and deep Talar, as if seeking an outlet for its waters, which are far too sluggish to force their way through the intervening obstacles. For many miles the river continues to run parallel to the Caspian, forming a tongue of land which was alive with game. Large flocks of wild fowl rose at each moment from the sedges, the ground was uprooted on every side by the wild boar, and my

greyhounds were soon completely knocked up in chasing the numerous hares which dodged among the thickets. The hours slipped away almost unmarked, as we hunted our way along.

We crossed several deep rivers, which at some seasons of the year are not fordable, and the sun was in the west when we reached the mouth of the "Babul." Here I bid adieu, with regret, to the pleasant shores of the Caspian. There is a voice of home to the ear of an Englishman in the hoarse murmur of the waves, and few there are to whom the sight of the sea does not recall the memory of many a happy hour.

Meshed-i-Ser, where we halted for the night, is merely a village, but it is the port of Balfurush, which was at one time the centre of a flourishing commerce. It stands within a mile of the mouth of the Babul, where there is a Russian fishing-station, not so productive, however, as that of Ferahabad. We left Meshed-i-Ser shortly after daylight. The rain

was falling heavily, but the day gradually cleared, and before we reached Balfurush, the sun burst forth in all his splendour. Our road led along the right bank of the Babul, through a flat but richly-wooded country. On either side of the river are numerous villages, surrounded by fields of flax, which is cultivated to a great extent in the neighbourhood of Balfurush. These villages bear a more European aspect than any that I have seen in the East. In the centre of each stands the village green, an irregular plot bordered by tile-roofed cottages, and by the humble mosque, consisting merely of a spacious room, open in the direction of the holy city of Mecca.

We reached the town of Balfurush about noon. The black mud which lay in the narrow streets reached to our horses' knees; and the vaulted bazaars were so low that frequently I had to stoop to my saddle-bow. We passed through the whole length of the town; and as the Prince-Governor was himself in-

habiting the palace, we took up our abode on an island without the town, situated in the middle of an artificial lake, or rather marsh, which looked like the very head-quarters of ague. Here some former governor had erected a summer palace, which was approachable only by a long narrow bridge of planks, without a parapet, and so slippery from the recent rains that it was at the greatest risk that our horses and baggage-cattle got across. In the centre of the island stood the "Birun," or gentlemen's apartments, which were occupied by some of the Prince's suite; at one extremity were the ladies' apartments, at the gate of which I ordered my mules to be unloaded.

Scarcely had I dismounted when my friend "Ardisheer Mirza" sent me the most loving greetings by his major-domo, who had orders to supply me with everything that I needed; and "Abbas Kooli Khan," my fellow-lodger on the island, paid me the welcome civility of sending me a tea-pot of excellent tea. I

had intended calling upon the Prince in the afternoon, but his Ferosh-bashi, or chief tent-pitcher, brought me word that after quitting the bath he had been seized with a violent attack of the ague, and could not see me until the morning. The sunset was very beautiful, and the snowy peak of Demawend, which during the whole day had been veiled in clouds, was tinged with the brightest pink. The Prince sent me two large flasks of the celebrated wine of Shiraz, and the "Khan" arrived most opportunely to assist in the discussion of them.

April 20th.—The morning was so delicious when I awoke, that, anxious as I was to be at my post in these unsettled times, I was glad of an excuse to remain another day at Balfurush. At an hour before noon a party of the prince's feroshes attended at the island to escort me to the palace. Nothing could be more cordial than the reception that I met with. During the first year that I was at Tehran, Ardisheer Mirza had been the nomi-

nal governor of that city in the absence of the Shah, and it was his hobby, at that time, to manœuvre the regiments which composed the garrison. We had met every morning on parade, and I had always found him friendly and willing to be taught. He was now looking thin and ill; and he told me that he had been rarely free from intermittent fever since he had assumed the government of Mazanderan. He intended moving to "Amul" on the morrow, for change of air, and engaged me to accompany him.

After quitting the palace I sent my horses back to the island, and strolled along the Amul road till I reached a handsome bridge over the river Babul, which, at this point, flows in a serpentine course through the heart of the forest. Immediately above the bridge another stream of considerable size unites its waters with those of the Babul, and, where they mingle, the salmon or the white-fish were rising at every moment. I was leaning over the parapet of the bridge, watching the

sun sink below the horizon, when the stillness of the evening was suddenly broken by the melancholy howl of the jackal, which was re-echoed from every side. These mournful vespers warned me to retrace my steps to the island.

The white plastered walls of the rooms which I inhabited were covered with rude sketches, in charcoal, which did not argue much for the taste or talent of my fair predecessors. Besides a whole Noah's ark of strange animals, which would have puzzled, not only the Zoological Society, but Heralds' College, there were divers ingenious representations of his Satanic majesty, with a very handsome allowance of horn and tail.

CHAPTER XLII.

Amul—Heraz River—Dangerous Pass—Caves of Aroo—Mount Demavend—Ah—Difference of Taste—Arrival at Tehran.

April 21*st.*—THE Prince, either hoping that the rain might cease, or possibly the worse for a late carouse, (a practice in which he is too apt to indulge, owing, perhaps, to the Georgian blood which flows in his veins,) delayed his departure so long that my patience was quite exhausted; and, leaving a civil message with Abbas Kooli Khan, I ordered my horses and took the road to Amul. It was with difficulty that we regained the mainland, so slippery was the bridge; nor was the clayey road much less so; and many a tumble did I see among the numerous tent-pitchers and scullions of the Prince, who, mounted on the top of heavy loads, were hastening towards

Amul to prepare accommodation for the Prince and his harem. The country was flat and tame, and but thinly inhabited. At the entrance of Amul a long stone bridge crosses the rapid and discoloured stream of the Heraz; it is so narrow that, two loaded mules would have difficulty in passing. The streets were almost impassable from the depth of mud, and the town looked wretched and forlorn.

April 22nd.—At Amul we quitted the low plain which lies between the Caspian and the mountains, and began gradually to ascend, tracking the stream of the Heraz, which was to be our guide up to its very source. For some miles there was a choice of roads: you might either knock your horses' legs to pieces in the rocky bed of the river, or plough through the forest-sloughs, which threatened at every step to engulph both horse and rider. The scenery was, however, beautiful; and an April day, alternate showers and sunshine, displayed the richly-wooded landscape to

advantage. We halted for breakfast at the foot of a steep and almost inaccessible pass, where the river, pent up between its rocky banks, chafed and fumed like a mountain-torrent. A narrow stair, hewn out of the solid rock and overhanging the whirlpool, formed the only path; and numerous caravans of laden mules were crowded together at the foot, awaiting their turn to commence the perilous ascent. Several of my cattle were forced to be unloaded lest their burdens should strike against some projecting rock and precipitate them from the narrow track. A sudden bend of the road changed, as if by magic, the whole aspect of the country. The noble woods had disappeared, and the flat-roofed villages proclaimed that we were no longer in Mazanderan. There was something indescribably refreshing in emerging from the damp and oppressive atmosphere of the low, swampy forest, and breathing once again the bracing air of the mountains. We had not yet returned to the parched and arid hills of Irak:

the turf was still fresh and green, enamelled with daisies and buttercups, and watered by a thousand sparkling rills.

April 23*rd*.—We halted for the night in a row of caves hollowed in the face of a perpendicular gravel-bank, the usual caravanserai of the muleteers of Mazanderan. They were about fifteen feet long by twelve in breadth, but so low that I could not stand upright. Straw, barley, and tobacco were to be purchased of the "Seraidar," or gate-keeper, but bread was not to be procured for love or money. Far below us, at the foot of the sloping bank upon which our caves opened, the Heraz flowed through a deep and rocky ravine. The night was dark, and, as each fresh faggot was thrown upon the watch-fires of the muleteers, a vivid light was cast upon the picturesque groups, and upon the fantastic masses of rock which had detached themselves from the overhanging hills, and almost blocked the entrance of the caves. These excavations, which are to be met with at in-

tervals of three or four miles, are probably of very ancient construction, for Quintus Curtius mentions that, in his time, the inhabitants of these regions dwelt in caverns excavated from the rock. Abbas Kooli Khan had endeavoured to dissuade me from returning to Tehran by this road, which he truly said was well nigh impassable. No other animal but a mule could have climbed the winding and precipitous path with a heavy load upon his back. Every horseman dismounted; and for miles we led our horses along a narrow track, where a single false step would have dashed them to atoms.

On the 25th we skirted the base of Demawend, which is indeed a stupendous mountain. Had I foreseen that circumstances would have prevented my returning in the summer, I would, even now, have attempted the ascent, though the winter's snow had scarcely begun to melt.

We had now arrived at the regions of snow; and our jaded cattle could with difficulty

extricate themselves from the heavy drifts, which had effaced all traces of the path, and thrown a solid bridge across the rapid torrent. At length we reached the summit of the pass where stands a little "Imam Zadeh," whose whitewashed dome was scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding snow. A zig-zag path of exceeding steepness quickly brought us into the vale of Demawend, and we halted for the night at the pretty village of Ah.

April 26th.—We were astir betimes, and made the most of the cool hours of the morning. The sun was rising when we reached the bank of the Jajerood, whose waters were swollen and discoloured. I was about to urge my horse into the stream, when a shout from the opposite side warned me of my danger. We ascended the left bank for upwards of half a mile, to a spot where the river divides into several branches, and there we crossed in safety. A very steep ascent, between high banks of limestone, led from the water's edge; and the sun was high when we gained the

crest of a ridge of hills which overlooked the plain and city of Tehran.

I had chanced to overhear one of my grooms exclaim to his comrades, as we left the woods and the green turf of Mazanderan behind us, "Praise be to Allah! we have returned from hell to paradise." As we now descended into the plain, I turned to my people, and said, "Who was it that called Irak paradise?" They laughed, but no one pleaded guilty to the charge. The converse of the exclamation would have been more just. It was one of those close, sultry days which I have experienced nowhere but in Persia. The wind felt like the breath of a furnace; and the sun shone so dimly through the dry haze, that our shadows were scarcely discernible. The horses were distressed, although we had not moved beyond a foot-pace, and the greyhounds lagged behind with their tongues hanging out. At length we reached the city walls; and as I rode through the Shemeroon gates, most devoutly did I wish

that my residence in Tehran might prove a short one; and that, when next my foot was in the stirrup, my horse's head might be turned in the direction of Europe.

THE END.

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